

**A socio-spatial approach towards the understanding of Place
Identity construction through the study of cultural event
spaces: A case of Guwahati, Assam**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Anusmita Das
(Roll no - 146105014)

Under the supervision of
Prof. Amarendra Kumar Das



Department of Design

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati

Guwahati - 781039, Assam, India

October, 2023



Dedicated to my family

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis entitled **“A socio-spatial approach towards the understanding of Place Identity construction through the study of Cultural Event Spaces : A case of Guwahati, Assam”** is my original work conducted under the supervision of Prof. Amarendra Kumar Das, at the Department of Design, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, Assam, India. I hereby declare to the best of my knowledge that this thesis contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or a substantial proportion of material which have been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at IIT Guwahati or any other educational institute, except where the due acknowledgement is made. Any contribution made to the thesis by others have been duly acknowledged in this thesis. The interpretations put forth are based on my reading and understanding of the original texts and they are not published anywhere in the form of books, monographs or articles. I also hereby declare that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work, and as per general norms of reporting research findings, due acknowledgements have been made wherever the research findings of other researchers have been cited in this thesis.

Place: Guwahati

Date:

.....
Anusmita Das

(Roll no. 146105014)

Department of Design

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati

Guwahati - 781039, Assam, India

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis work entitled “**A socio-spatial approach towards the understanding of Place Identity construction through the study of Cultural Event Spaces : A case of Guwahati, Assam**” presented herein by Ms. Anusmita Das for the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Department of Design, Indian Institute of Technology has been carried out under my supervision and is her bonafide work.

I confirm that this thesis is an original work of Ms. Anusmita Das except where due acknowledgement has been made and has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any academic award within or outside this institution.

I also confirm that Ms. Anusmita Das has undergone four specified/ suggested course work and has fulfilled all the mandatory requirements as per the rules and regulations necessary for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Department of Design, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, Assam, India.

Place: Guwahati
Date:

.....
Prof. Amarendra Kumar Das
(Thesis supervisor)
Department of Design
Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati
Guwahati - 781039, Assam, India

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This journey of thesis has been a memorable one where numerous people have helped me along the way and to whom I remain forever indebted. This thesis would remain incomplete without mentioning their selfless acts of help.

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Prof. Amarendra Kumar Das for his invaluable patience and feedback throughout the entire course of research. His unconditional support and encouragement through many arduous moments helped me to overcome them with grace.

I could not have taken this journey without my doctoral committee members, Prof. Debkumar Chakrabarti, Prof. Arupjyoti Saikia, Dr. Pratul Chandra Kalita, Dr. Supradip Das and Dr. Prasad Bokil for their continuous guidance and meaningful insights. I further extend my gratitude towards Assistant Prof. Shareka Iqbal, for her affable advice and support whenever I needed them.

I convey my immense gratitude to Sri. Kabindra Prasad Sarma, Saru Doloi, Kamakhya Temple for his valuable time and knowledge. I am incredibly thankful to Mr. R. Thakuria (Deputy Director, Assam Tourism), Mr. Sameer Tanti, (poet and retired tourist information officer at the Department of Assam Tourism), Mr. Dinamani B. Kayastha and Mr. Mriduplaban Nath (AMTRON), PWD officers who were in charge of the various accommodation camps during Ambubachi Mela, apart from the Assam Tent House and Sree Maa Kamakhya Sewa Trust volunteers for their invaluable help and co-operation during my field work. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Mr. Rajib Bhakat and his entire family for aiding me during my field work of Chhath Puja. They made the experience not only fruitful but also extremely enjoyable and memorable.

I would also like thank all the participants who gave their valuable time and patience. I truly appreciate the endless moral support extended by my dearest friends Ms. Umme Hani and Mr. Ranjan Bordoloi. Huge thanks to my lab mates for their encouragement and a special mention to Mr. Manohar Mahato for helping me out with everything under the sun.

And most importantly, I am thankful to my parents for their blessings and continuous support

throughout this entire journey. I would like to specially mention the contributions made by my father Mr. Siddheswar Das as he accompanied me to my field work despite his busy office schedule, and my brother Anurag for being there whenever I needed him during these field visits. My mother Mrs. Nirupama Das has been my backbone as she took care of my infant son while I was writing my Thesis. Their unconditional support and love will always be appreciated. I would be remiss in not mentioning my husband, Harsha, for putting his faith on me and encouraging me to take up this research topic in the first place. His continuous drive to motivate me for a strict routine is what helped me to juggle new motherhood, a job and completing my thesis, for which I owe him much. Finally, I would like to thank my son, Ishaan for being a complete angel and providing me the space to complete my work. His innocence and love has been extremely therapeutic during most hectic days.



ABSTRACT

Contemporary Indian cities have been in the flux of an emerging cultural resurgence that has greatly impacted its socio-cultural environment. As such there has been a proliferation of festivals, growing interest in the revival of traditions and rituals, celebration of indigenous arts, crafts, and cultural symbols which represent the unique identity markers of each city. This response could be considered as a response to the rapid globalisation and urbanisation, which has led to mass migration of people in urban environments leading to the confluence of ideas, philosophies, and culture, while stretching and challenging the psychological and physical boundaries of cities around the globe. As a result, cities have become the physical manifestations of such paradigm shifts thus becoming hubs of cultural expression which are notably rich in visual culture. In this regard, the city can be viewed as a palimpsest which constantly transforms, evolves and mutates like an organic entity, thus redefining its meanings over time as result of a conglomeration of multiple intermingling discourses. As these cities grapple with the changes brought forth by globalisation, they also provide a sneak peek into their response against the current wave of homogenising forces of globalisation. Cities can no longer be perceived as a static entity; rather, they are morphing into urban spaces which are more fluid and malleable wherein temporality and informality are significant urban characteristics. In the post-industrial scenario, cities in India have become critical sites of negotiation and are expected to become some of the largest urban agglomerations of the twenty-first century. As cities are growing, the built and cultural heritage is fading in the cacophony of modernization. This global phenomenon of identity crisis has been approached by various discourses with varying perspectives, yet an extensive and all-encompassing comprehension of identity construction lacks in embracing a socio-spatial approach. There is a need for critical analysis of the present context of urbanism in India which focuses on the emerging characteristics that define Indian cities. This requires a particular local thinking approach for global cities in India. The formal domain of studying cities needs to be stretched to include new ideas of urbanism which puts equal emphasis on the intangible cultural, temporal and dynamic aspects of the city. Spectacles such as festivals which form an integral part of the Indian urban scenario require in-depth analysis on their role in shaping place identity. With growing emphasis on the ‘cultural economy’ as a strategy for urban renewal at both national and global platforms, the subject of inquiry of this research focussed on the spaces in the city where such manifestation of cultural events occur. This includes cultural

event spaces encompassing social practices, rituals and various festive celebrations which are not necessarily religious in nature. This was premised on the belief that cultural manifestations imparts deep-rooted meanings to places and enhance people's association with a place through their recurring nature of occurrence and public demonstration of various ritual and social processes. The research probes into the theoretical underpinnings of 'Place Identity' while exploring ways in which participants' perception of such event spaces could be enhanced. Guwahati, a tier two city and the biggest city of North East India has been considered as the site of study. The study will eventually draw findings to support the hypothesis that "Cultural events may influence the identities of people involved and their construct of Place Identity" through the analysis of the recent resurgence of multicultural festivals in Guwahati and their inherent impact on the changing aspects of identity of the place and the people involved.

This research was designed as an embedded case study type within the domain of mixed methods research that aided in the formation of a Strategic Framework to guide the intervention process that promotes people place associational value and a process oriented approach towards development in contemporary Indian cities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	i
DECLARATION	ii
CERTIFICATE	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	vi
LIST OF CONTENTS	viii-xvii
LIST OF FIGURES	xviii
LIST OF TABLES	xxi
LIST OF APPENDICES	xxii
LIST OF GLOSSARY	xxiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xxvi

Chapter 1 : INTRODUCTION		1-21
1.1	Introduction	02
1.2	Research context	04
1.3	Need and relevance of the study	05
	1.3.1 Cultural events in the current development scenario	07
	1.3.2 Role of culture-led regeneration in sustainable development	09
	1.3.3 Role of policy framework in India leading to current development scenario	10
1.4	Area of focus	12
1.5	The research design	14
1.6	Scope & Limitations	15
1.7	Outline of the Thesis Report	18
1.8	Insights from the chapter	20

Chapter 2 : THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK		23-76
2.1	Identity : A human need in an urbanised world	24
2.2	Identity concepts from an Interdisciplinary approach	24
2.3	Significance of ‘space’, ‘place’ and ‘identity’ relationship	27
2.4	The construction of Place Identity : Emerging notions of identity and place	28
2.5	The dimensions of place-identity	30

	2.5.1 Place meaning	32
	2.5.1.1 Sensory engagement with place	33
	2.5.1.2 Distinctiveness making sense of place	34
	2.5.1.3 Continuity through place invariants	35
	2.5.1.4 Historical Knowledge of the place	36
	2.5.1.5 Narratives adding symbolic meaning to place	36
	2.5.1.6 Summary	37
	2.5.2 Place attachment	38
	2.5.2.1 Historical attachment to Place	39
	2.5.2.2 Emotional Attachment to place	42
	2.5.2.3 Place dependence	43
	2.5.2.4 Urban reminders of place	44
	2.5.2.5 Place Memory	45
	2.5.2.6 Spirit of a place	46
	2.5.2.7 Summary	47
	2.5.3 Place experience	49
	2.5.3.1 Place Event Engagement	49
	2.5.3.2 Self-Esteem & Self-Efficacy	50
	2.5.3.3 Place Involvement	51
	2.5.3.4 Summary	51
2.6	Theoretical Inferences	52
2.7	Cultural events	54
2.8	Key Aspects of cultural events	55
	2.8.1 Cultural Content	56
	(i) Ceremonial rituals	57
	(ii) Spectacles of conspicuous display	57
	(iii) Reenactment of narratives	58
	(iv) Cultural performances	59
	(v) Conspicuous consumption	59
	(vi) Competitive spirit	60
	(vii) The spirit of offerings	60
	(viii) Commercial activities	61

	2.8.2 Spatio-temporality aspect of cultural event spaces	62
	2.8.3 Audience	62
	2.8.4 Stakeholders	63
2.9	Space and Cultural events interrelationship	63
	2.9.1 Socio-Spatiality of Cultural Events	63
	2.9.2 Festivals in everyday urban spaces	65
2.10	Event-space relationship process	68
	2.10.1 Embeddedness	68
	2.10.2 Territory	68
	2.10.3 Intimacy	69
	2.10.4 Granularity	70
	2.10.5 Triangulation	71
	2.10.6 Movement	72
	2.10.7 Scale	73
	2.10.8 Sensuality	74
	2.10.9 Narrative	76
2.11	Inferences	76

Chapter 3 : METHODOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS		77-99
3.1	Introduction	78
3.2	Deliverables of the methodological explorations	78
3.3	Situating the research design in the larger philosophical domain : Need for Interdisciplinarity	84
3.4	Theoretical underpinning of the methodology adopted	84
	3.4.1 Phenomenology : Interpretative phenomenological analysis	84
	3.4.2 Positionality	85
	3.4.3 Validity and reliability	86
	3.4.4 Ethical framework for conduct of research	87
3.5	Process of selection of cases	87
	3.5.1 The Temporal aspect	88
	3.5.2 The Spatial aspect	88
	3.5.3 Socio-Cultural aspect	89

3.6	The selected cases	89
3.7	Research methods/tools to document event-space relationship during festivals	90
	3.7.1 Archive Research	91
	3.7.2 Semi-structured interview	91
	3.7.2.1 Formulation of the questions	91
	3. 7.2.2 Purposive sampling	92
	3. 7.2.3 Conduct of the interview process	93
	3. 7.2.4 Participant observation	93
	3. 7.2.5 Transcribing the interviews for analysis	93
	3.7.3 Physical traces observation	93
	3. 7.4 Images & Video documentation	94
3.8	Research methods/tools to document Place-Identity	94
	3.8.1 Preliminary contextual studies	94
	3. 8.2 Semi-Structured interview	96
	3. 8.2.2 Preparation of the semi-structured questionnaire	96
	3. 8.2.2 Sampling process for conducting the semi-structured interview	96
3.9	Analysis	96
	3.9.1 Analysis of data collected from interview for socio-spatial themes using IPA method	97
	i) More spatial than socio-cultural	97
	ii) More socio-cultural than spatial	97
	iii) Equally socio-cultural and spatial	97
	3. 9.2 Analysis of data collected from interview for Place Identity motives and their socio-spatial relevance	97
3.10	Research methods/tools to interpret and analyse spatial aspects of cultural event spaces	98
	3.10.1 Visual analysis	97
	3. 10.2 Perceptual analysis	98
	3. 10.3 Socio-cultural analysis	98
	3. 10.4 Functional analysis	98
	3. 10.5 Morphological analysis	99

	3. 10.6 Temporal analysis	99
3.11	Conclusion	99

Chapter 4 : ANALYSIS OF SPATIAL ASPECTS OF CULTURAL EVENT SPACES CONTRIBUTING TO PLACE IDENTITY		101-175
4.1	Introduction	102
4.2	The city of Guwahati	102
	4.2.1 The representational space of Guwahati produced by mythical and symbolic narratives	102
	4.2.2 Socio-spatial continuities and changes leading to the shaping of the city	103
	4.2.3 Socio-cultural fabric of Guwahati City	109
	4.2.4 Festival urbanism of Guwahati : An intersection of spatial practices and representational space	110
4.3	Festival typology in Guwahati	112
	4.3.1 Natural feature based event space	112
	4.3.2 Event spaces dispersed in the city	112
	4.3.3 Open spaces as event spaces	113
	4.3.4 Precinct based event spaces	113
4.4	Spatial characteristics of the urban spaces where the selected cultural events are celebrated	114
	4.4.1 Spatial characteristics of urban spaces containing celebration of Ambubachi Mela	114
	4.4.1.1 Kamakhya Temple precinct	114
	(i) The visual dimension	114
	(ii) The morphological dimension	115
	(iii) The functional and social dimension	116
	(iv) The temporal dimension	117
	4.4.1.2 Sonaram Field precinct	117
	(i) The visual dimension	117
	(ii) The morphological dimension	118
	(iii) The functional and social dimension	118
	(iv) The temporal dimension	118

	4.4.1.3 Maligaon precinct	121
	(i) The visual dimension	121
	(ii) The morphological dimension	121
	(iii) The functional and social dimension	121
	(iv) The temporal dimension	122
	4.4.1.4 Pandu to Kamakhya Devalaya precinct	124
	(i) The visual dimension	124
	(ii) The morphological dimension	124
	(iii) The functional and social dimension	126
	(iv) The temporal dimension	127
	4.4.2 Spatial characteristics of urban spaces containing celebration of Chhath Puja	127
	4.4.2.1 M.G. Road - Panbazar to Bharalumukh precinct	128
	(i) The visual dimension	128
	(ii) The morphological dimension	128
	(iii) The functional and social dimension	129
	(iv) The temporal dimension	130
	4.4.2.2 M.G. Road - Uzan Bazar precinct	132
	(i) The visual dimension	132
	(ii) The morphological dimension	133
	(iii) The functional and social dimension	133
	(iv) The temporal dimension	134
	4.4.3 Comparative analysis of the six precincts	136
4.5	Spatial aspects enhancing the festival experience	139
	4.5.1 The festive experience of Ambubachi Mela	139
	4.5.1.1 A sense of 'territory'	140
	4.5.1.2 A sense of 'intimacy'	142
	4.5.1.3 The sense of 'sensuality'	143
	4.5.1.4 The 'scale' of the event	145
	4.5.1.5 Granularity	146
	4.5.1.6 Triangulation	146
	4.5.1.7 Narrative	147

	4.5.1.8 Movement	149
	4.5.1.9 Embeddedness	149
	4.5.1.10 Inferences	150
	4.5.2 The festive experience of Chhath Puja	156
	4.5.1.1 A sense of ‘territory’	157
	4.5.1.2 A sense of ‘intimacy’	157
	4.5.1.3 The sense of ‘sensuality’	158
	4.5.1.4 The ‘scale’ of the event	160
	4.5.1.5 Granularity	162
	4.5.1.6 Triangulation	163
	4.5.1.7 Narrative	164
	4.5.1.8 Movement	164
	4.5.1.9 Embeddedness	166
	4.5.1.10 Inferences	168
	4.5.3 Spatial qualities that enhance the experience of festive events	169
4.6	Conclusion	172

Chapter 5 : PARTICIPANT’S PERCEPTION OF PLACE IDENTITY THROUGH ANALYSIS OF SELECTED CULTURAL EVENTS		177-223
5.1	Preliminary perception study	178
	5.1.1 Methodology	179
	5.1.2 Inferences	180
5.2	The participant’s perspective on the selected cases	182
	5.2.1 Distinctiveness making sense of place	183
	5.2.1.1 Ambubachi Mela: “The cradle of Tantra”	183
	5.2.1.2 Composite shared culture of Chhath Puja	185
	5.2.2 Sensory engagement with place	186
	5.2.2.1 Ambubachi Mela in a picturesque landscape	186
	5.3.2.2 Chhath Puja as a myriad of experiences	186
	5.2.3 Continuity through invariants of event places	187
	5.2.3.1 The deep reverence of goddess Kamakhya as the invariant of Ambubachi Mela	187

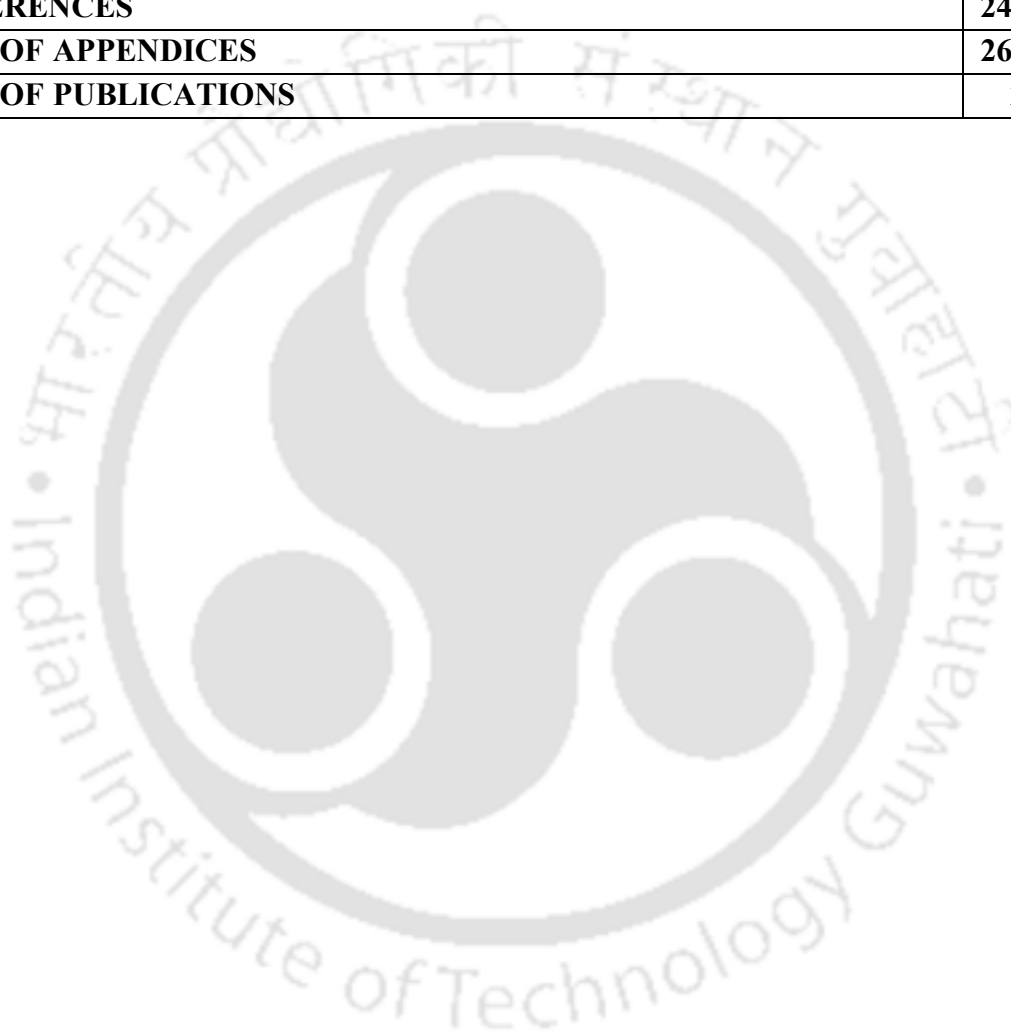
	5.2.3.2 Continuity of rituals and traditions as the invariants of Chhath Puja	188
	5.2.4 Historical Knowledge of the event	189
	5.2.4.1 Ambubachi Mela	189
	5.2.4.2 Chhath Puja: A non-native festival	190
	5.2.5 Narratives adding symbolic meaning to place	191
	5.2.5.1 Ambubachi Mela: Symbolism, Legends, Narratives and concept of sacrifice	191
	5.2.5.2 Chhath Puja: A rich narrative of mythology	193
	5.2.6 Historical attachment to cultural events	194
	5.2.6.1 Ambubachi Mela: Significance of the historic core	194
	5.2.6.2 Chhath Puja: Diverse opportunities to form people-place ties	195
	5.2.7 Emotional Attachment to place	196
	5.2.7.1 The changing nature of Ambubachi Mela	196
	5.2.7.2 Transmutative visual culture of Chhath Puja	197
	5.2.8 Place dependence	198
	5.2.8.1 Ambubachi Mela: Dependency on the surrounding areas	199
	5.2.8.2 Chhath Puja: Ghats as places of performance	200
	5.2.9 Urban reminders of place	200
	5.2.9.1 The tangible and intangibles as reminders of Ambubachi Mela	200
	5.2.9.2 The river as a reminder of city's narratives during Chhath Puja	201
	5.2.10 Place memory	202
	5.2.10.1 Collective memory during Ambubachi Mela	202
	5.2.10.2 Memories of past experiences during Chhath Puja	202
	5.2.11 Spirit of a place	203
	5.2.11.1 Spiritual and social relations as the underlying spirit of Ambubachi Mela	203
	5.2.11.2 Chhath Puja: The essence of collective gratitude	204
	5.2.12 Place Event Engagement	205

	5.2.12.1 Ambubachi Mela: Venue for formal and informal interactions	205
	5.2.12.2 Place engagement aiding in visibility of Chhath Puja	206
	5.2.13 Self-Esteem & Self-Efficacy	206
	5.2.13.1 Foregoing materialistic pleasures at the core of self-esteem and self-efficacy at Ambubachi Mela	207
	5.2.13.2 Proud custodians of traditions	208
	5.2.14 Place Involvement	209
	5.2.14.1 Place involvement fostering loyalty	209
	5.2.14.2 Chhath Puja fostering collective identity through collective involvement	209
5.3	Place Identity factors and their socio spatial relevance	210
	5.3.1 More spatial than socio-cultural	216
	5.3.2 Equally socio-cultural and spatial	217
	5.3.3 More socio-cultural than spatial	218
	5.3.4 Inference of Place Identity factors and their socio-cultural and spatial relevance	219
5.4	Conclusion	222

Chapter 6 : INFERENCES AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK		225-243
6.1	Summary & Discussion	226
6.2	Contribution of the thesis	228
	6.2.1 Factors affecting Place Identity in multicultural urban environments	228
6.3	Strategic Framework - An open approach towards planning process	229
	6.3.1 Recognition of Spatial Territory having continued significance	230
	6.3.2 Creating a Spatial contrast for enhancing legibility	231
	6.3.3 Embedding Functional Diversity	232
	6.3.4 Embedding sense of Safety	233
	6.3.5 Promoting Sensuality of the precinct	234
	6.3.6 Embedding Place Narrative in the urban fabric	234
	6.3.7 Integrating pause points for restoration in the urban network	235

	6.3.8 Enhancing Adaptability of the precinct	236
	6.3.9 Regulating Movement Pattern/Structure in the city	237
6.4	Contribution of the strategic framework to the dimensions of Place Identity dimensions	238
6.5	Reviewing the research process, key research inquiries and methodological contributions	239
6.6	Scope for further research	242

REFERENCES	245-259
LIST OF APPENDICES	261-276
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS	277



LIST OF FIGURES

No.	Figure	Title	Page
1	Figure 1.1	Culture and sustainable development: three models	10
2	Figure 1.2	Research Strategy	16
3	Figure 2.1	Evolution of spatial thinking	28
4	Figure 2.2	Attributes contributing to formation of place meaning	38
5	Figure 2.3	The tripartite model of place attachment	40
6	Figure 2.4	Religious place attachment: a model	41
7	Figure 2.5	Process of Historical Attachment	42
8	Figure 2.6	Attributes contributing to formation of place attachment	48
9	Figure 2.7	Attributes contributing to formation of place experience	52
10	Figure 2.8	Triadic lens of Place-Identity formation dimensions and attributes	53
11	Figure 2.9	Aspects of Cultural Events	55
12	Figure 2.10	Food camps serving food to devotees during Ambubachi Mela, 2017 illustrating the spirit of offerings	61
13	Figure 2.11	Role of event-place relationship in the production of social space	67
14	Figure 2.12	Devotees performing morning <i>Usha arghya</i> during Chhath Puja, Guwahati	69
15	Figure 2.13	People dressed up in costumes representing Hindu Gods during Ambubachi Mela, Guwahati	70
16	Figure 2.14	Thrissur Pooram, Thrissur	72
17	Figure 2.15	Karaga Festival, Bengaluru	73
18	Figure 2.16	Kumbh Mela, Allahabad	74
19	Figure 2.17	Dhunuchi Naach, Kolkata	75
20	Figure 3.1	Research Methodology Overview	83
21	Figure 3.2	Guiding questions for the semi-structured interview	91
22	Figure 3.3	Methodology for preliminary study	95
23	Figure 3.4	Questionnaire for the preliminary semi-structured interview	95
24	Figure 4.1	Guwahati during Ahom Rule	104
25	Figure 4.2	Expansion of Guwahati during Colonial Period	105
26	Figure 4.3	Spatial extent of Built-up-area of Guwahati	106
27	Figure 4.4	An aerial view of Guwahati highlighting the major arterial roads	107
28	Figure 4.5	Spatio temporal analysis of variation in built-up-area density levels showing the expansion from the old city core towards outer city fringes	108

29	Figure 4.6	The morphological dimension of Kamakhya Temple precinct	115
30	Figure 4.7	The functional and social dimension of Kamakhya Temple precinct	116
31	Figure 4.8	Spatial aspects of Kamakhya Temple precinct	117
32	Figure 4.9	The morphological dimension of Sonaram Field precinct	119
33	Figure 4.10	The functional and social dimension of Sonaram Field precinct	120
34	Figure 4.11	Spatial aspects of Sonaram Field precinct	120
35	Figure 4.12	The morphological dimension of Maligaon precinct	122
36	Figure 4.13	The functional and social dimension of Maligaon precinct	123
37	Figure 4.14	Spatial aspects of Maligaon precinct	124
38	Figure 4.15	The morphological dimension of Pandu-Kamakhya precinct	125
39	Figure 4.16	The functional and social dimension of Pandu-Kamakhya precinct	126
40	Figure 4.17	Spatial aspects of Pandu-Kamakhya precinct	127
41	Figure 4.18	The morphological dimension of Panbazar Bharalumukh precinct	130
42	Figure 4.19	The functional and social dimension of Panbazar Bharalumukh precinct	131
43	Figure 4.20	Spatial aspects of Panbazar Bharalumukh precinct	132
44	Figure 4.21	The morphological dimension of Uzan Bazar precinct	134
45	Figure 4.22	The functional and social dimension of Uzan Bazar precinct	135
46	Figure 4.23	Spatial aspects of Uzan Bazar precinct	136
47	Figure 4.24	Process of listing spatial aspects of cultural event spaces	138
48	Figure 4.25	Sense of territory created during the festival of Ambubachi Mela, Guwahati	141
49	Figure 4.26	Sense of territory created during Ambubachi Mela	142
50	Figure 4.27	Sense of intimacy created during Ambubachi Mela	143
51	Figure 4.28	Sense of sensuality created during Ambubachi Mela	144
52	Figure 4.29	Scale of the event spaces of Ambubachi Mela	145
53	Figure 4.30	Movement during the event of Ambubachi Mela	149
54	Figure 4.31	Spatial aspects which contribute to the experience of the festival of Ambubachi Mela in Guwahati	155
55	Figure 4.32	Intensity of sense of territory observed during the Chhath Puja celebrations in M.G. Road (Panbazar to Bharalumukh precinct)	158

56	Figure 4.33	Intensity of sense of territory observed during the Chhath Puja celebrations in M.G. Road (Uzanbazar precinct)	159
57	Figure 4.34	The spatial aspects enhancing intimacy during the event of Chhath Puja in M.G. Road (Panbazar to Bharalumukh precinct)	160
58	Figure 4.35	The spatial aspects enhancing intimacy during the event of Chhath Puja in M.G. Road (Uzanbazar precinct)	161
59	Figure 4.36	Sense of sensuality created by diverse experiences during Chhath Puja	162
60	Figure 4.37	Celebration zones of the festive event of Chhath Puja	163
61	Figure 4.38	Triangulation during the event of Chhath Puja	164
62	Figure 4.39	Reenactment of narratives during the event of Chhath Puja	165
63	Figure 4.40	Movement during the event of Chhath Puja	166
64	Figure 4.41	Spatial aspects which contribute to the experience of the festival of Chhath Puja in Guwahati	169
65	Figure 4.42	Spatial qualities that enhance the experience of events	170
66	Figure 4.43	Links between spatial aspects of urban spaces of selected cultural event spaces and spatial aspects that enhance the experience of these cultural events	171
67	Figure 5.1	Word cloud showing residents' perception of Guwahati	181
68	Figure 5.2	Sample of transcribed answers during preliminary semi-structured interview	182
69	Figure 5.3	Promotional Poster for Ambubachi Mela, Guwahati	184
70	Figure 5.4	Ritual of <i>Sandhya arghya</i> and offerings during the festival of Chhath Puja in Guwahati	185
71	Figure 5.5	Devotee carrying the bamboo <i>Prasada</i> basket	189
72	Figure 5.6	Distribution of sacred shrines on Nilachala	191
73	Figure 5.7	Kamakhya, a modern pictorial representation.	193
74	Figure 5.8	Devotees of Chhath Puja performing <i>Buniya Bari</i> (prostration march) in Guwahati	196
75	Figure 5.9	Billboards adorning the roads of Guwahati, Ambubachi Mela, June 2017	198
76	Figure 5.10	Temporary installations depicting a various representations of symbolic cultural elements and intricately ornamented with flowers and lights during Chhath Puja, Guwahati, 2017	199
77	Figure 5.11	'Sun of Change' installation in Kachomari Ghat, Chhath Puja, 2017	199
78	Figure 5.12	Summary of emerging themes and their socio-cultural and spatial relevance	219

79	Figure 5.13	Place Identity factors and their socio-spatial relevance (Ambubachi Mela)	220
80	Figure 5.14	Place Identity factors and their socio-spatial relevance (Chhath Puja)	221
81	Figure 5.15	Place Identity factors and their relative significance	222
82	Figure 6.1	Place Identity and Socio-spatial complexity	227
83	Figure 6.2	Addition of two new aspects to the Place Identity framework as an outcome of the research	228
84	Figure 6.3	Formation of the Strategic Framework for reinforcing Place identity	230
85	Figure 6.4	Contribution of the Strategic Framework to Place Identity dimensions	238
86	Figure A1	Comparative study of symbolic artifacts used in Bihu in traditional and contemporary context	273
87	Figure A2	Symbolic representations of cultural element Japi from Assamese culture depicted in the traditional Bhelaghar of Magh Bihu.	274
88	Figure A3 & A4	Symbolic representations of cultural element from media inspired culture depicted in the traditional Bhelaghar of Magh Bihu.	274

LIST OF TABLES

No.	Tables	Title	Page
1	Table 1.1	Research Design	17
2	Table 3.1	Research Question 1	79
3	Table 3.2	Research Question 2	80
4	Table 3.3	Research Question 3	81
5	Table 3.4	Research Question 4	81
6	Table 3.5	Research Question 5	82
7	Table 3.6	Validity and reliability in this research	86
8	Table 3.7	Formulating the guiding questions	92
9	Table 4.1	Decadal population growth trend of Guwahati from 1901- 2011	109
10	Table 4.2	Rate of migration to Guwahati City	110
11	Table 4.3	Transcription and interpretation of interview during the festival of Ambubachi Mela in Guwahati	151

12	Table 4.4	Transcription and interpretation of interview during the festival of Chhath Puja in Guwahati	167
13	Table 4.5	The sixteen spatial attributes which enhance Place Identity and their presence in the six precincts	173
14	Table 5.1	Emerging themes and their socio-cultural and spatial relevance using IPA	211
15	Table 5.2	Interconnections with fourteen factors of PI and themes developed using IPA during Ambubachi Mela	213
16	Table 5.3	Interconnections with fourteen factors of PI and themes developed using IPA during Chhath Puja	215

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix	Title	Page
Appendix 1	Semi structured questionnaire survey during festive events	261
Appendix 2	Process of decoding factors forming Place Identity from analysis of semi-structured questionnaire	263
Appendix 3	Construction of open ended questionnaire taking cues from the transcribed preliminary studies	267
Appendix 4	A study and exploration of the transmutative visual culture of 'Magh Bihu' in Assam	272
Appendix 5	Morphology of festival: Temporal marker, Spatial marker, Narrative fortifier and Visual Identifier	275

LIST OF GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
<i>Aahara (Assamese)</i>	Middle part of June.
<i>Ahom (Assamese)</i>	The Ahom, or Tai-Ahom is an ethnic group from the Indian states of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh
<i>Arghya (Sanskrit)</i>	The ritual of offering prayers to Sun God during Chhath Puja by pouring water and milk from the hands.
<i>Baul</i>	The Baul are a group of mystic minstrels of mixed elements of Sufism, Vaishnavism and Tantra from Bangladesh and the neighbouring Indian states of West Bengal, Tripura and Assam's Barak Valley and Meghalaya.
<i>Buniya Bari (Hindi)</i>	Prostration march
<i>Chhath vrata (Sanskrit)</i>	Fasting ritual observed during the festival of Chhath Puja.
<i>Chulhas (Hindi)</i>	Earthen oven
<i>Communitas</i>	A strong sense of solidarity and bonding that develops among people experiencing a ritual, rite of passage, or other transitional state together.
<i>Connotation</i>	The abstract meaning or intension of a term, which forms a principle determining which objects or concepts it applies to
<i>Denotation</i>	A direct specific meaning as distinct from an implied or associated idea
<i>Dopdar (Assamese)</i>	Mediaeval Ahom Barphukan, an official of the Ahom Dynasty
<i>Environmental psychology</i>	Branch of psychology that explores the relationship between humans and the external world
<i>Ghat (Assamese)</i>	A riverbank
<i>Globalisation</i>	A term used to describe how trade and technology have made the world into a more connected and interdependent place
<i>Glocalisation</i>	Simultaneous process of globalisation and localisation of culture. This trend can be defined as the desire to ensure that each culture realises its 'singularity' in a multicultural world.
<i>Guha (Assamese)</i>	Cave
<i>Hati (Assamese)</i>	Row
<i>Intercultural</i>	Intercultural describes communities in which there is a deep understanding and respect for all cultures. Intercultural communication focuses on the mutual exchange of ideas and cultural norms and the development of deep relationships.

	In an intercultural society, no one is left unchanged because everyone learns from one another and grows together.
<i>Jyotisha (Assamese)</i>	A star, astrology or shining
<i>Maidan (Hindi)</i>	An open space in or near a town, used as a playground, festival events, public events or parades
<i>Mela (Hindi)</i>	Indian fair
<i>Morphology</i>	the study of the forms of things
<i>Multicultural</i>	Multicultural refers to a society that contains several cultural or ethnic groups. People live alongside one another, but each cultural group does not necessarily have engaging interactions with each other.
<i>Naamghar (Assamese)</i>	Prayer House are places for congregational worship associated with the entire Assamese community and the Ekasarana sect of Hinduism, in particular, that is native to Assam
<i>Nahay Khay (Hindi)</i>	Refers to Chhath's first day, which marks the start of the festival. On this day, the followers fast and consume just one salty meal after cleaning their house and having a holy bath in the river Ganga
<i>Peetha (Sanskrit)</i>	Shrine
<i>Prasada (Sanskrit)</i>	Religious offerings in Hinduism
<i>Prag (Sanskrit)</i>	Former or eastern direction
<i>Pragjyotishpura (Sanskrit)</i>	Ancient city and capital of the Varman dynasty (350 - 650 A.D).
<i>Pragmatic</i>	Relating to matters of fact or practical affairs
<i>Ratha (Sanskrit)</i>	Chariots
<i>Resurgence</i>	An increase or revival after a period of little activity, popularity, or occurrence.
<i>Socio-cultural</i>	Combining social and cultural factors
<i>Socio-spatial</i>	The socio-spatial perspective in urbanism research addresses how built infrastructure and society interact. It assumes that social space operates as both a product and a producer of changes in the metropolitan environment.
<i>Spatial Identity</i>	Spatial identity is a result of a connection between people, physical elements of places, and activities associated with them. The development of identity occurs through the psychological process of place attachment.
<i>Spatial triad</i>	Perceived, conceived, lived space– that looks at space as a social product
<i>Surya (Sanskrit)</i>	Sun God
<i>Thekua (Hindi)</i>	A hard wheat-based cake sweetened with jaggery

<i>Urban Culture</i>	Urban culture, any of the behavioural patterns of the various types of cities and urban areas, both past and present.
<i>Ujoni (Assamese)</i>	A term used to denote upper Assam
<i>Uzan (Assamese)</i>	Upstream
<i>Visarjan (Sanskrit)</i>	Immersion
<i>Visual Culture</i>	A term that refers to the tangible, or visible, expressions by a people, a state or a civilization, and collectively describes the characteristics of that body as a whole.
<i>Visual hierarchy</i>	the principle of arranging elements to show their order of importance
<i>Xatra (Assamese)</i>	Xatras are socio-religious institutions in the Assam region that belong to the Mahapuruxiya Dharma
<i>Yatra (Sanskrit)</i>	A procession or pilgrimage, especially one with a religious purpose.

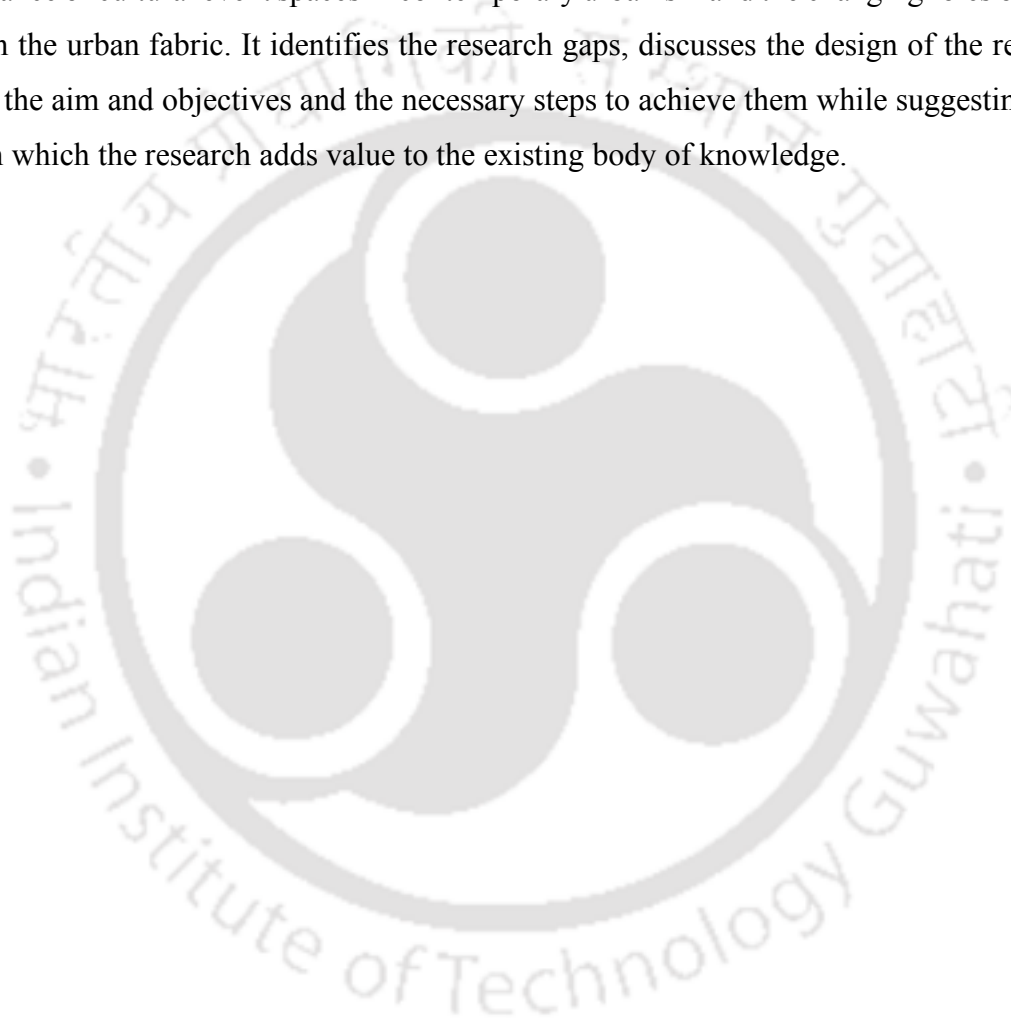
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Full form
GMA	Guwahati Metropolitan Area
GMDA	Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority
AMTRON	Assam Electronics Development Corporation Ltd.
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
ICH	Intangible Cultural Heritage
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UN	United Nations
GMA	Guwahati Metropolitan Area
GS	Guwahati Shillong Link Road
JnNURM	Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission
HRIDAY	Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana
PRASAD	Pilgrimage Rejuvenation And Spiritual Augmentation Drive
AMRIT	Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation
MoUD	Ministry of Urban Development
GOI	Government of India
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
CEPT	Centre for Environment Planning & Technology



Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the context of the research and grounds it to the present urban condition today. Reading a city in a time where change is the norm, with urban spaces gaining new meanings and functions with changes in cultural practices conveys the hybrid urgencies of metropolitan India. This chapter intends to provide a better understanding of the need and relevance of the research by elaborating the context of the research and explaining the significance of cultural event spaces in contemporary urbanism and the changing roles of social space in the urban fabric. It identifies the research gaps, discusses the design of the research, defines the aim and objectives and the necessary steps to achieve them while suggesting ways through which the research adds value to the existing body of knowledge.



1.1 Introduction

The socio-cultural environment of contemporary India is privy to an emerging cultural resurgence as seen in the proliferation of festivals, growing interest in the revival of traditions and rituals, celebration of indigenous arts, crafts, and cultural symbols which represent their unique identity markers owing interest can be considered as a response to cultural homogenisation that has been infesting urban environments globally after globalisation. Mass migration, a manifestation of the open economy, led to cities becoming hubs of multicultural expressions. The varied responses witnessed in present-day urban India are the increasing interest in heritage, intangible culture, tourism and branding around place-specific cultures. Various government policies are promoting this cultural resurgence through tourism, promoting creative and cultural industries, cultural activities like organising fairs, festivals, heritage walks, revival of lost traditions and also at the community level that continue to reinvent and reimagine many such age-old cultural practices in a myriad of new ways and forms. There is no dearth of studies on the global cities around the globe. However, South Asian cities provide a new realm of study that has not been explored in detail so far. This is more evident in India, where second and third tier cities who are equally a part of the rapid urbanisation have hardly been the subject of interest until recently. They have now grabbed scholarly attention propelling an emerging 'Southern turn' in urban theory (B. Singh, 2018). As these cities grapple with the changes brought forth by globalisation, they also provide a sneak peek into their response against the current wave of homogenising forces of globalisation. There is thus a need for critical analysis of the present context of urbanism in India which focuses on the emerging characteristics that define Indian cities. This requires a particular local thinking approach for global cities in India. The formal domain of studying cities needs to be stretched to include new ideas of urbanism which puts equal emphasis on the city's intangible cultural, temporal and dynamic aspects. Spectacles such as festivals which form an integral part of the Indian urban scenario require in-depth analysis on their role in shaping place identity. Their role has not been explored enough as a factor for studying place identity even though they pervade the urban landscape and dominate the popular visual culture of Indian cities. Though there is no dearth of literature on identity in various disciplines, due to the lack of perceived importance of space as an integral aspect of identity construction and the unaccounted link to architecture, most of the available non-spatial research on identity remains incoherent. UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible

Cultural Heritage had recognised ‘Social practices, rituals and festive events’ as one of the domains through which Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is manifested. Such socio-spatial interactions impart a festive spirit to the everyday spaces of the city. As people come together for a collective experience, meaning is attributed to such places of performance, thus establishing people-place ties (Casey, 2004; Halbwachs, 1992; Hayden, 1995; Stokols & Shumaker, 1987). The spaces in the city where such manifestation of cultural events occur was the subject of inquiry of this research. This includes cultural event spaces encompassing social practices, rituals and various festive celebrations which are not necessarily religious in nature. Such cultural events enhance people’s association with a place through their recurring nature of occurrence and public demonstration of various ritual and social processes. Through the various narratives associated with cultural events, a sense of continuity with the past is maintained, reinforcing people’s sense of identity (Hayden, 1995), which have continued to thrive through rapid urbanisation and homogenisation.

Cultural events are an inseparable aspect of the intangible cultural heritage and temporal urbanism. Despite their ephemeral nature, such events leave lasting memories in the minds of the people experiencing them. The places of manifestation of such cultural events are steeped in history and mythology of the place and carry deep-rooted meanings for the users of the space. The research thus emphasises the need to address such cultural event spaces in the development and planning of Indian cities.

For the residents of any city, the urban fabric holds layers of meaning created over years of engagement with place episodes where the temporal and the everyday overlapped (Buttimer & Seamon, 2014; Certeau, 1998; Relph, 1976; Y. F. Tuan, 1979). Among the researchers involved in the discussion of the relationship between individuals and cultures with their environment, Tuan (1979) was among the earliest followed by Relph (1976). In his book ‘Place and Placelessness’, Relph (1976) discusses the relationship of an individual with a place through seven levels of involvement with place episodes. Thus, people or the users of a place are the primary stakeholders and any transformation in the environment would highly impact them. Event places need to accommodate the role of people as a significant aspect in the process of their formation. Building on this aspect, this research aims to address the proposed statement that “Cultural events may influence the formation of participants’ construct of Place Identity”.

This chapter further elaborates on the need and relevance of the research in the present context. The research questions, the research design and methodology for conducting the research are laid out in this chapter. Finally, the chapter concludes by giving an overview of the structure of the thesis report.

1.2 Research context

The city is a representation of not just the tangible built fabric, but an assemblage of various intangible characteristics that contribute to its identity, transformation, history, etc. Various socio-spatial factors are at play that manifest themselves contributing to the spatial identity of the city. In the present age, as cities expand and continue to grow, there has been a mass influx of people that not only stretches the physical boundaries of cities, but the psychological periphery as well. With the confluence of ideas, philosophies, and culture, cities increasingly encounter greater challenges for the negotiation of their identity which is a dynamic process of adaptation and reconstruction. The adaptation is observed notably in the intangible culture. Urban spaces are gaining new meanings and functions with changes in cultural practices. Thus, a city can no longer be seen as unidirectional, but as a constantly changing, evolving organic entity where fluidity and temporality are observed as some of the key aspects. In a time where change is the norm, cities are increasingly facing issues of identity. As the urban culture of a city transforms over time, intangible culture has become one of the principal factors for examining how a city metamorphoses with time and context. In a bid to bolster their image, cities are resorting more and more towards the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of a city to rebuild and redefine their identity. As culture is a representation of the people, their beliefs and values with a stronghold in the past and present, cultural events as representations of the intangible cultural heritage can be a powerful tool in analysing their role in the creation of multifarious identity of the urban fabric. The research delves into understanding the sense of relatedness that people develop with a place through interaction in the socio-spatial realm as a way to adapt themselves towards place engagement which reconstitutes their identity over time.

Though there is no dearth of literature on identity in various disciplines, from the perspective of urbanism, however, due to the lack of perceived importance of space as an integral aspect of identity construction and the unaccounted link to architecture, most of the available non-

spatial research on identity remains incoherent. In order to have a deeper and complete understanding of our spatial environments, urban designers, urban planners and architects need to accost these missing threads between identity and urban fabric. This entails a more interdisciplinary approach that would take into account both the non-spatial and spatial perspective, to throw light on the intricacies of identity, thus providing a platform for urban designers, urban planners and architects alike to have a better understanding which could aid and enhance their interaction with their environment.

1.3 Need and relevance of the study

As the world becomes more global, there has been an increasing interest and debate on the identity crisis experienced by people in contemporary cities. However, comprehending identity is a daunting task as it involves multifarious factors and hence, a complex domain for research. The study of cultural events has evolved into a prominent topic of research due to their relevance in the 21st century. However, most of the research forays into the socio-economic aspect and examines the contribution of festival tourism to sustainable socio-economic development (Gursoy et al., 2004; McKercher et al., 2008; O'sullivan & Jackson, 2010; Robinson et al., 2008; Thrane, 2016; Yu & Turco, 2010). Several authors have also researched on people's reasons and motivations to attend festivals. A few of them (Backman et al., 1995; Formica & Uysal, 1996; Mohr K et al., 1993; Ralston & Crompton, 1988; Scott, 1995; Uysal et al., 1993) vaguely claim that cultural events are by their nature a form of tourist attraction while a few others claim that the nature and type of the event determines the audience they attract. According to Schneider and Backman (1996), tourists are motivated by their desire to experience a sense of escape from the routine of everyday. While in contrast, Ralston & Crompton (1988, cited in LeBlanc 2004) and Kerstetier and Mowrer (1998) argue that family and social benefits are the motivators for attending cultural events. Uysal *et al.* (1993) have identified five reasons that motivate people to attend cultural events such as festivals, namely,

- i) a desire for excitement,
- i) escape,
- ii) socialisation,
- iii) family and togetherness and
- iv) event novelty.

A sixth motivation was further added by Backman *et al.* (1995) namely relaxation.

Fredline and Faulkner (2014) are a few of the notable people who worked on the socio-cultural impact of cultural events on local communities. They suggest that the success of a cultural event depends hugely on how the events impact the quality of life of the local residents. They further elaborate on it by listing out their findings on the factors that affect the hosting of an event such as their personal experience(s) and societal values, attachment to their community, the age of the participants, their identification with the festival theme and their perceptions of participation (Fredline & Faulkner, 2014; Mihalik, 2000). However, Edensor (2001) and Shepherd (2002) focussed on the cultural commodification aspect of festivals where local communities may be paid to conduct rituals and participants may be frequently persuaded to take part in these rituals.

Compared to all the other aspects of cultural event research, very little work has been carried out on the more profound issue of the possible contribution of cultural events to identity construction. Researchers have looked at the role of festivals from a place-marketing and image making aspect (Boo & Busser, 2008; Ritchie & Beliveau, 2016). Festivals have the ability to affect and change the image of the places of celebration (Ritchie & Beliveau, 2016). Getz (1991) emphasises on the contribution of festivals towards enhancing the image of a community. On a similar vein, Hall (1992) and De Bres & Davis (2010) comment on the role that festivals could play in the development and maintenance of community identity through cultural event places and thus enhance their cultural identity.

This research is particularly of significance in Indian cities as most cities in India developed organically over time, usually with a traditional settlement as the urban core. Until the 19th century, most of these cities retained their organic pattern that had evolved in harmony with the users of those spaces. Culture of such cities were manifested in their urban fabric in the form of festival rituals, religious processions, cultural events, which due to their grandeur, spectacularisation, collective memory and socio-cultural context impart them with a unique image and identity. But in recent years, the cacophony of urbanisation and unprecedented growth of developing cities has led to homogenisation of the cultural fabric. There is however a silver lining as over the years there has been a paradigm shift in the modes of economic

generation in urban areas with ‘Cultural Economy’ emerging as a prominent strategy for Urban Development (UNESCO, 2009). As the economic impacts of festive events have been established, many cities are resorting to culture-led regeneration strategies designed to attract tourists to the city and ensure maximum benefits to the city and its residents (Miles & Paddison, 2005). The Habitat III Conference (2016) acknowledged the significance of socio-cultural dimensions for ensuring that cities of the future are more people-centric, inclusive, liveable and resilient (UN, 2016). The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments contends that, without culture, there is no future for cities: “cities need vitality, meaning, identity and innovation, and citizens need to widen their freedoms.” (UCLG 2010)

1.3.1 Cultural events in the current development scenario

The advocacy efforts of UNESCO to represent the role of culture in sustainable development process has paved the way for several UN Resolution on Culture and Development, with the latest in December 2021. These resolutions voice the need to anchor culture within sustainable development while adapting the current policy frameworks to achieve this goal. As a part of society's cultural capital, cultural events have been discussed extensively in literature. The evolution and transformation of cultural events across the globe with insights on the Indian context will be discussed for an enhanced understanding of the phenomenon. This section has been adapted extensively from the writings of Richards & Palmer (2010) by focussing on the socio-spatial transformations of cultural event spaces across the globe.

Across pre-industrial and medieval history, rituals played an important role in the everyday life of people leading to settlements being designed around cultural event spaces such as the Greek agora or the Roman forum (Richards & Palmer, 2010). In Indian cities, most of the settlements grew organically around a temple, or the ghats (riverbank) of the river which were usually the sites of cultural events. Most of these medieval cities revolved around a festive calendar, as cultural events continued to grow in significance.

As the industrial city developed, formalised spaces in the urban fabric such as open grounds, community centres, etc., became the locations for festivals and fairs (Richards & Palmer, 2010). As such, recreation increasingly became more ‘rationalised’ and ‘controlled’. The industrial revolution positioned events as a ‘break from work’ where people could rest and

relax. Industrial capitalism created new uses for the city which led to creation of more spaces for events, and events for spaces. New cultural landmarks such as museums, concert halls, and theatres evolved, giving birth to new cultural events. Festivals eventually became a showcase of goods and services as wealthy manufacturers started recognising the working class as a potential market. As the industrial city moved away from rural traditions, new traditions were invented to give meaning to urban life. The civic culture started gaining momentum as opposed to the earlier control exerted by the church and royalty as the main creator of cultural events. In response, considering the threat to their privileged position, new events were invented by the religious and royal leaders. While the small towns and villages were usually the major sites of cultural production, the investments which institutionalised them were located in cities. In cities, informal forms of cultural expressions took a more formalised approach to accommodate the restrictions put their performance. Such a restricted approach forced both performers and observers to pay a price for their participation , thus reducing the publicness of public spaces drastically as event spaces became less accessible physically and economically. Meanwhile, due to lack of recognition and development pressures, the traditional cultural spaces started fading in importance.

Tourism, culture, leisure have become prolific tools for economic development and image enhancement in the post-modern society. Cultural events being temporal in nature, add dynamicity to previously stagnant cities and their importance has been widely recognised as marketing campaigns to promote cities are immensely dependent on such festivals and fairs. The increasing importance of image, ephemera and spectacle have given a new impetus to events, and particularly cultural events, as creators and carriers of meaning and wealth in cities (Richards & Palmer, 2010). For the purpose of management of events and festive calendars, administrative structures were created. The positioning of culture in the center of urban policy was linked to various goals such as the need to stimulate economic growth, the need to bolster social inclusion and the need to develop to new identities appropriate to the rapidly changing urban landscape. Thus, cultural events assumed the new role of creators of meaning. The state of Gujarat has been fiercely promoting their fairs and festivals and has been able to leave their mark on the international tourism map. According to Harvey (1989), cities have shifted their policies from urban managerialism to urban entrepreneurialism to adjust themselves to the complex new economic and social circumstances. The introduction of the entrepreneurial

approach impacted the cultural sector with cultural funding directly linked to ‘products’ or ‘outputs’ of cultural institutions, now measured using a variety of ‘performance indicators’. Even though events are temporal in nature, they are capable of generating symbolic capital which is the most precious of modern commodities. The entrepreneurial city led to the emergence of the development of the concept of the creative city that focused largely on the importance of design, cultural industries and cultural amenities as key resources (Richards & Palmer, 2010). The creative city model places culture and creativity at the forefront of development through heritage-led regeneration projects (Landry, 2012). The surroundings of many heritage precincts, which are often located in the core areas of cities, are constantly undergoing rapid changes to harness the potential of the cultural resource. Increased number of stakeholders in such places have led to the contestation of the cultural environment, which could lead to disassociation and alienation if a direction is not envisioned in the ongoing rapid transformation (UN-Habitat, 2004). Hence, this research is an attempt to understand the complexity of the cultural development process and underline the necessary steps required for the socio-cultural sustenance of cities.

1.3.2 Role of culture-led regeneration in sustainable development

Until the last decade or so, the role of culture/ cultural assets in sustainable urban development was negligible in the discussions around urbanisation, which have been taking place since 1976 (Habitat I conference organised by the United Nations). In the current scenario, however, culture-led regeneration approaches towards sustainable development have been the focal point of numerous international agendas. These discussions have encompassed a diverse realm ranging from cultural heritage to culture based tourism to leverage culture as a driving force for developing cohesive and inclusive cities.

UNESCO’s advocacy efforts for the culture and development approach deserve special mention as they have resulted in several UN Resolution on Culture and Development adopted by the UN General Assembly (latest in December, 2021). These resolutions voice the need to adapt policy frameworks to better anchor culture within sustainable development. The integration of culture in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in 2015 was a landmark event where culture is specifically targeted (Target 11.4). This framework assesses the role and contribution of culture across different SDGs and policy areas.

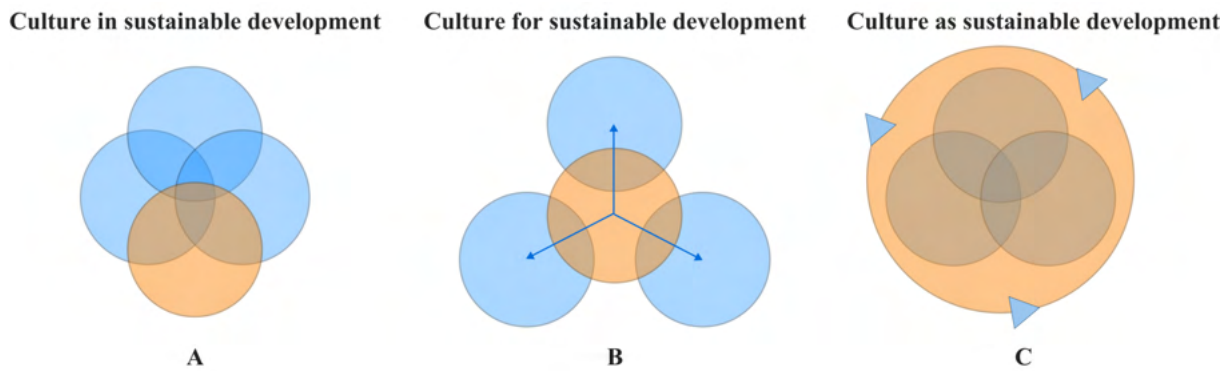


Figure 1.1: Culture and sustainable development: three models (Dessein et al., 2015)

Fig. 1.1 represents the three models of culture and sustainable development. The three roles of culture (represented in orange) in sustainable development (the three circles represent the three pillars). Culture added as a fourth pillar (A), culture mediating between the three pillars (B) and culture as the foundation for sustainable development. The arrows indicate the ever-changing dynamics of culture and sustainable development (C).

1.3.3 Role of policy framework in India leading to current development scenario

Post-independence from 1950 till 2015, development in India has been guided by the Planning Commission of India, and thereafter by Niti Aayog. The five year plans by the Planning Commission are sectoral in nature and guided by the current needs of the nation. By drawing linkages across the strategic plans, Yamini Narayan discusses the trends of development as devised by the Planning Commission of India (Narayanan, 2014). The first few five years focussed on the agricultural sector and then the industrial development which were the basic needs of the country as a developing nation and having just attained independence in 1947. Urbanisation, infrastructure development and alleviating poverty were the major focus areas for the first seven five year plans (Narayanan, 2014). Thus, the urban policies were framed keeping the basic human needs in mind. Initially, the metropolitan cities were the focus of planning, compared to the small and medium-sized cities causing migration to these cities. Later on in the sixth plan, the medium-sized cities were given focus to mitigate the large influx of people and regional disparities. Parallel to urban development, tourism was also promoted as a source of economy generating largely focusing on showcasing the heritage and cultural assets to the world. After the 74th Constitutional Amendment the urban governance was

developed for local levels facilitating a lot of urban changes in many Indian cities. The Ministry of Culture was established as a separate entity in 2001 to complement the growth of the tourism sector. The Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM) launched by the Ministry of Urban Development in 2005 envisaged heritage as a potential driver for development for the first time. The National Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) was launched in January 2015 to guide the holistic development of heritage cities. Under this scheme 12 cities were identified and City Heritage Plans (CHPs) were devised for each with execution process currently underway. The Assam Heritage (Tangible) Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Maintenance Act, 2020 (Received the assent of the Governor on 12th October, 2020) aims to provide for the protection, preservation, conservation, maintenance and restoration of tangible heritage of the state of Assam covered under the Assam Ancient Monument's and Records Act, 1959 and to develop and promote these heritages (The Assam Gazette-Government of Assam, 2020). This act is one of the latest heritage conservation act by any state in India which looked at vernacular heritage as a part of built heritage while empowering the local community's involvement in heritage conservation.

While reflecting on the various proposals and schemes, many researchers have indicated the lack of inclusiveness and the absence of residents' aspirations to be involved in the system (Desai, 2017; Iyengar, 2017; Ravindran, 2017). Desai (2017) critiques the template proposed under the HRIDAY scheme by highlighting the visitor centric approach adopted through tourist infrastructure and amenities. Iyengar (2017) remarks that the scheme fails to recognise the network of settlements and habitats which are "rich repositories of lived experiences, struggles, interdependencies, street ethics, and rich practices of cooperation and collaborations based on years of living together". She further critiques that the HRIDAY scheme should recognise these irreplaceable resources rather than projecting a sanitised and beautified approach which will eventually lead to the risk of ghettoizing these communities and habitations. This research thus focused on this gap identified by many scholars by addressing the construct of Place-Identity in heritage-rich cities in India undergoing the current development processes.

Tourism has been an integral aspect of India's five-year plans and plays a very significant role in the country's economic development. The National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) was launched by the Ministry of Tourism in 2014 under the twelfth five-year plan to promote sustainable pilgrimage tourism. Such schemes

indicate the large scale investments in promotion of religious tourism across India with an aim to promote domestic tourism. 12 cities were identified under this scheme spread across religious centres in India. The entire project would be ‘outcome oriented’ rather than ‘process oriented’ with pre-set targets and benchmarks to measure the project’s success (Ministry of Tourism, 2014). Such strategies do not necessarily align with the needs and aspirations of the people. This is an important concern that was addressed as a part of this research by proposing a strategic framework for intervention in the case study city which was selected under the PRASAD scheme.

1.4 Area of Focus

Cities in India, including metropolitans and second tier cities, all aspire to create a niche for themselves in the globalised world. As globalisation spread across cities globally leading to rapid exchange of ideas, philosophies, culture, many cities attempted in a cracked and refracted manner to replicate the global cities (Appadurai, 2000). Though as evident in many Asian cities, there is a stark diversity or heterogeneity that has baffled many urban theorists and renewed a growing interest in studying these cities in detail. Cities in India have gradually accepted these changes as part of their unique diversity and are celebrating them. One of the ways that heterogeneity is manifested in Indian cities is through the numerous cultural events organised on a grand scale, completely transforming space and time. Such dramatic occurrences most often contribute to the socio-cultural and economic sustenance of the city. This current study, based on empirical findings through case studies, will attempt to understand the relevance of cultural event spaces in the everyday life of second-tiered Indian cities while propagating the need to address it cohesively. Based on theoretical concepts across disciplines, this research will discuss the significance of cultural events and their in the formation of participants’ construct of Place Identity in multicultural Indian cities. The larger intent is to formulate an approach that would contribute to holistic spatial development of second tiered Indian cities.

Guwahati, a tier two city and the biggest city of North East India has been considered as the site of study. The study will eventually draw findings to support the hypothesis that “Cultural events may influence the identities of people involved and their construct of Place Identity” through the analysis of the recent resurgence of multicultural festivals in Guwahati and their

inherent impact on the changing aspects of identity of the place and the people involved. Contemporary Guwahati is grappling to find its identity in the wake of being projected as a modern city with global aspirations, as the gateway to the Northeast, as a city of temples, a smart city, or as the prevailing economic centre of Northeast India. These varied notions of the city create a paradigm of conflicting images of the city that superimposes on the images of the past. Tapping on cultural intangibles like rituals and traditions witnessed in the resurgence of festivals, both old and new, (Ambubachi Mela, Navami Brahmaputra, Chhath Puja, Brahmaputra Kite Festival, Metropolis and other such urban festivals), deploying new urban spaces such as city recreational areas, riverfront development to name a few and preservation of heritage sites undertaken by the Archaeological Survey of India, the city time and again capitalises on cultural symbols by branding them. In the face of cultural homogenisation, they aid in resurrecting the image of contemporary Guwahati and the idea of place.

In the proposed Master Plan 2025 (GMDA, 2009) for Guwahati city, a decentralised multi nuclei approach has been adopted which will include a new city centre, a capital complex and three new towns. The proposed road network will comprise a radial-cum ring system with the radial/axial roads being interconnected by an inner ring road, ring road and peripheral ring road. Guwahati lies on the banks of the Brahmaputra River which has been proposed for river front development sought to maximise the beautiful vast expanse of the river bank. The Master Plan also has proposals for the conservation of important archaeological and architectural sites of historical importance such as the Kamakhya Temple Zone, Brahmaputra River Temple Zone (The Umananda Temple, the Janardhanan Temple, Sikh Temple) and the Vasistha Ashram Complex. Apart from the above, various other socio-cultural facilities are being proposed in the city as well as in the surrounding areas. The Master Plan's main objective is the creation of a hierarchical city structure that would aid in the enhancement of the city image. Hence, the proposals have been segregated under various tiers or levels such as City Level, District Level and Community Level. City level development plans envision various recreational spaces around the city such as City Centre, Commercial Centre, Facility Centre apart from specific allocation of area for Exhibitions and fairs keeping in tune with the image of the city as the cultural hub of Assam. Ecology is another aspect that the Master Plan touches upon through the conservation of the various Bills (waterbodies) in and around Guwahati city. To accommodate the rising population of Guwahati, three New Towns proposed at the North-

West, South-West and North-East in GMA have been reserved as scheme areas for subsequent planning of various uses (GMDA, 2009). However, as observed across the planning policies in India, the master plan is yet to consider people's social needs of having a sense of belongingness in their cities. This is an integral dimension that adheres people to a place through associative links between people and the city spaces. This eventually leads to the basis for the production of the social space which infuses spaces with meanings. The cities in India are rich in their intangible cultural heritage which are manifested spatially in spaces evolved over generations through their beliefs, practices and shared values to produce the social space characterised by various negotiations, interactions, multiculturalism and co-existence. The current schemes adopted for the conservation of heritage of intangible cultural heritage of Indian Heritage cities by the various executive bodies such as JnNURM, HRIDAY and PRASAD (Grant Thornton India, 2011; ICOMOS India & CEPT University, 2017; Kundu, 2014; Ministry of Tourism & GOI, 2015; MoUD & GOI, 2014) are time based and product oriented which fail to capture the essence of continuous process of development of cities. In the rapidly changing urban scenario in favour of growing urbanisation several policies have been aimed towards the North eastern region of India such as Look East, Act East, AMRUT, Smart City, with the latest act of the Assam Legislative Assembly- The Assam Heritage (Tangible) Pro . Thus, there exists a gap in their policies which requires a strategic process-oriented approach as opposed to the current product-oriented approach.

1.5 The research design

Cultural events are an intrinsic aspect of Indian cities with their grand celebrations in the everyday spaces of the city. Alessandro Falassi (1987) refers to such events as “time out of time” as they completely transform space and time. They are one of the significant contributors to the socio-cultural and economic sustenance of the city. Cultural events functioning as occasions to express collective belonging, providing opportunities for creating collective shared histories, cultural practices, beliefs and ideals are potential influencers of social identity and place identity.

Aim of the research : To understand, interpret and establish the role of cultural events in the formation of individual and place identity through event-place-people experiences.

The first research question aimed at inquiring about the significance of cultural events in Indian cities. This inquiry provided a contextual background and is addressed in the introductory chapter. The second research question attempted at understanding the relationship between events and space. The everyday space transforms to accommodate the requirements, performance and experience of events. Place Identity is a complex phenomenon and requires understanding from diverse disciplines to establish a strong theoretical background. Thus, the third question dealt with assimilating and deciphering the perception of people around place identity. The fourth and final question aimed at validating the assumption adopted in this research by probing the role of cultural events in the formation of participants' place identity.

A detailed research design was outlined to systematically address the various research questions into specific objectives required to answer the research questions progressively. Table 1.1 lists the research questions along with their research objectives and intended outcomes. Fig. 1.2 gives an overview of the research strategy adopted for the research. The research adopted multiple methodological strategies to arrive at answers to the research questions. Hence, the method adopted for this research was a mixed method with a pragmatic approach with an embedded case study type as it explored a phenomenon within the real-world context. The aim was to establish relationships between the phenomenon and the context in which it occurred. A qualitative research approach was thus deemed the most appropriate as it allowed the extraction of deep insights from the people involved in the phenomenon. Another reason was the fact that the investigator has little control over the event as the focus is on a contemporary real-life phenomenon (Aase & Fossåskaret, 2007; Yin, 2003).

1.6 Scope and limitations

The research focussed on a second tier city like Guwahati which is yet to come to terms to its changing urban needs. Thus in this contested context, the research focussed on cultural intangibles such as cultural events which have gained momentum in the last few decades and celebrated within the historic urban settings lasting for a duration of 3 days or more. These spatial and temporal aspects allowed the selection of two festivals celebrated in the historic core of the city. Owing to the complex nature of identity and identity formation, these phenomena could be studied and analysed through a variety of lenses. Thus, the data collected and analysis method adopted in this research sheds light on only specific aspects and not the

broader domain of identity construction. The dynamic nature of the concept of identity will keep on evolving over time. The components of identity under investigation are considered based on their relevance to the social context during which the research was undertaken. Identity is an unpredictable and elusive concept which can be studied both at the individual as well as the collective level. An emic view was considered while conducting the research. The data collected through questionnaires, interviews aims to capture both the self and community aspect of identity, along with place identity, though personal biases and preferences of the respondents may affect the outcomes of this research. The perception of pilgrims and tourists were also considered along with the resident's perception. This research was conducted within the above mentioned limitations. In the light of future scope, each of these limitations could show the direction for future research.

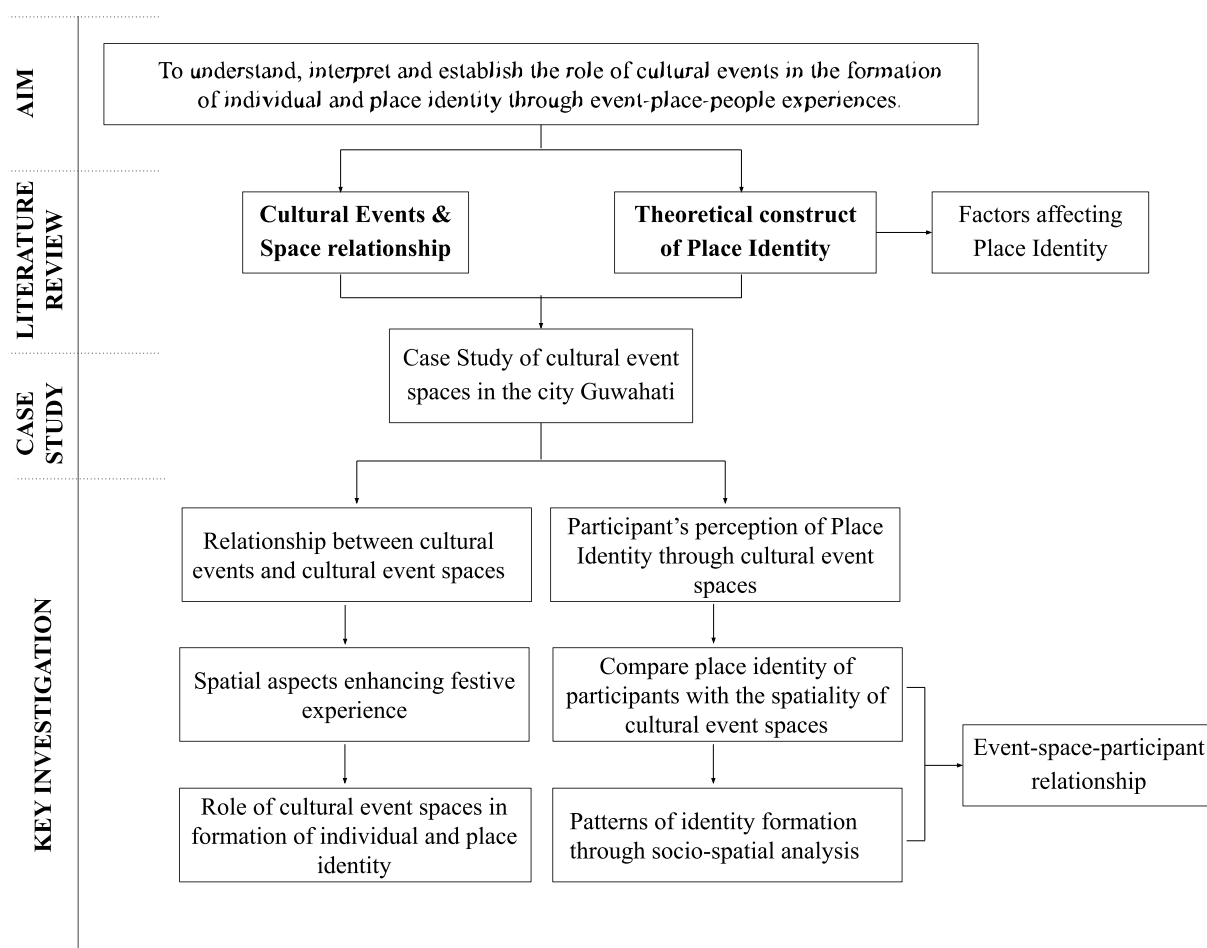


Figure 1.2: Research Strategy

Table 1.1: Research Design

RESEARCH QUESTION	OBJECTIVE	INTENDED OUTCOME
Q1 What is the significance of cultural events in present day urbanism?	To understand the significance of cultural events in the present context of urbanism in India.	Narrative on socio-spatial characteristics of cultural event spaces in urban environments
Q2 How do cultural events perform in everyday urban spaces?	To understand how the spatial aspects of everyday urban spaces accommodate and accentuate the performance of cultural events	Spatial characteristics of urban environments contributing to enhancing festival experience
Q3 What are the various theoretical constructs influencing place-identity construction in multicultural urban environments?	To decipher the various theoretical constructs of place-identity for required depth of understanding of the dimensions of place meaning, place experience and place attachment	Factors affecting place identity
	To objectively document residents' perception of Place-Identity through the theoretical constructs of Place Identity	Patterns of identity formation through socio-spatial analysis
Q4 What is the role of cultural events in the construction of an individual's place identity?	To compare the perception of place-identity of the attendees with the spatiality of festivals	Hypothesis assessment
	To identify the spatial attributes contributing to the enhancement and construction of place-identity	Spatial aspects contributing to place-identity formation
Q5 How can cultural event spaces be considered in the development and planning process?	To establish assessment frameworks for intervening in multicultural urban environments	Strategic framework of analysis

1.7 Outline of the Thesis Report

The thesis report has been structured in a manner that it follows a narrative while systematically unveiling the research methodology. At the beginning of each chapter, a brief narrative is provided, summarising the intent of the research, the research questions, the research methodology followed to arrive at the significant outcomes of the research. It also highlights the relevance of the research by building up a case for the research and the contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

The thesis report is laid out into Six chapters as described below:

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter lays down the foundation for the Thesis by outlining the background context and establishing a base for the need and relevance of the research in present times. By deliberating on the current urban scenario in India and the new wave of urbanism spreading across Indian cities, this chapter helps in establishing the motivation for the research. Through a detailed process of narrowing down to the area of focus, it elaborates on the significance of Place Identity and its relevance in today's transforming urban environment. It emphasises on why the perception of participants matters in the formation of identity. By identifying the research gap, this chapter lays out the proposition for the research. It further explains the fundamental Aims, Objectives and Research Questions apart from key Methods and Frameworks adopted for the study.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Review has been extensively covered in this chapter and forms the conceptual base of the research. The key concepts of the research have been discussed in detail along with insights from each. The relationship between cultural events and spaces has been analysed along with the theoretical construct of Place-Identity. The chapter starts by explaining the relevance of identity and concepts from an interdisciplinary perspective. It theoretically deconstructs Place Identity into the various dimensions of cognition, affection and perception with the help of literature review supported by ethnographic survey. The second section of the chapter starts by defining cultural events and its various components. The spatiality of cultural events is further analysed which sets the criteria for the selection of case studies. This chapter formulates the operative framework used for the conduct of this research.

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS

This chapter forms the link between the conceptual and contextual aspects of the research. The overall methodology for the contextual studies, the specific methods of inquiry for collecting data, and analysing the required information are defined in this chapter.

Chapter 4: ANALYSIS OF SPATIAL ASPECTS OF CULTURAL EVENT SPACES CONTRIBUTING TO PLACE IDENTITY

The intent of this chapter is to expand on the spatial qualities of cultural event spaces which play a significant role in enhancing the participants' construct of Place Identity. In the first section, a broad overview of the case study city, Guwahati has been presented. This section also outlines the preliminary study conducted before the main case studies. The intent of this section is to provide a prologue to the subsequent sections and chapters. A narrative account of the case studies is presented to provide a holistic overview of the two cultural events and to get an in depth insight into their complex, layered characteristics. The second section of the chapter is the analysis of the spatial characteristics of the cultural event spaces. This was carried out by probing at their visual, morphological, functional, social and temporal dimensions. The third part is the analysis through phenomenological tools of the spatial characteristics of cultural event spaces enhancing the festive experience of participants. This chapter concludes by deducing a set of spatial aspects which play a significant role in enhancing participants' construct of Place Identity. It is proposed that these set of spatial aspects should be taken into consideration while conducting any intervention strategy, providing the basis on which the strategic framework is formulated in the concluding chapter.

Chapter 5: PARTICIPANT'S PERCEPTION OF PLACE IDENTITY THROUGH ANALYSIS OF SELECTED CULTURAL EVENTS

The fifth chapter documents and analyses participants' perceptions of the cultural events under investigation through the Place Identity parameters identified in chapter two. The intent of this chapter is to validate the hypothesis that "Cultural events may influence the identities of people involved and their construct of Place Identity". Focusing on the emic view adopted in this thesis, this chapter documents and analyses the participant's perception of festivals celebrated in the case study city. Since the research is exploratory, a combination of research methods were adopted as described in the third chapter to document and interpret the manner through

which participants perceive the contribution of the cultural events to place identity. The inferences from the main case studies discussed are synthesised and developed into socio-spatial propositions for identity constructions. They were then analysed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, wherein the transcripts were perused to find instances of a theme. The chapter concludes with the socio-spatial and socio-cultural aspects of cultural event spaces which play a significant role in enhancing identity and provide a strategic framework for the analysis of identity construction through cultural event spaces in multicultural urban environments which forms the theoretical contribution of the research as discussed in the concluding sixth chapter.

Chapter 6: SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

This final chapter of the thesis assimilates, interprets and summarises the findings and contribution of this research. The summary explains the premise of the research and the research design that was developed to address the aims and research questions of the research. This chapter discusses the theoretical and methodological contribution of the research. Considering that cities are akin to living eco systems, where change is but obvious, a process-oriented approach was suggested instead of a product-oriented approach. This could be the right stage to implement in a second-tiered city where no formalised planning has taken place yet. A strategic framework was thus designed to guide the intervention process which also allows for flexibility to urban designers and policy makers. A set of objectives were included as a part of this framework to make it workable while respecting the essence of the built environment. Reviewing the research process by stating the contributions the research made to the body of knowledge, this chapter concludes with scope for further research.

1.8 Insights from the chapter

To summarise, this chapter firstly describes the cultural emergence visible in India in today's context. It draws the importance of raising concern regarding the relevance and significance of cultural event spaces. The relevance of the research is outlined in this chapter. It lays emphasis on the emerging notions in identity construction and negotiation. This research attempts to dissect and shed some light on this new turn in urbanism of Indian cities which puts emphasis on the growing cultural resurgence in Indian cities. The research gap pertains to the absence of the aspect of spatiality in understanding identity as well as the opportunity to study

in detail the socio-spatial and socio-cultural impact of cultural events on identity construction in Indian cities through a second tier city like Guwahati. The objectives and research questions have been raised to further the study. The research strategy outlines the methodology and methods adopted in this study.

Thus, this chapter sets the stage for further work carried out in the report by first establishing the context and then raising appropriate research questions, and the answers to which are revealed in the subsequent chapters.





Chapter 2 : THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Identity has been a complex domain of research with the increasing debate on identity crisis experienced by people today. This chapter discusses identity as a basic human need and explores the relationship between place and identity through different disciplinary perspectives. The role of place in identity construction processes and the changing notions of place in current urban scenarios has been discussed in this chapter. People's association with spaces imparts meaning and adds value to the physical entity. However, such ties with places are not only based on the physicality of places but also deeply embedded in the intangibilities, temporalities, semiotics, narratives around places, culture and various forms of its manifestations. The formation of people place relationship is a dynamic process and constructed through individual and collective interactions of people with place and time. The changing conceptions of space/place and place identity which are extremely relevant in the current urban scenario forms the primary discussion. The Literature Review further probes the theoretical construct of Place Identity as a product of people's interaction with places in an Indian context. Perception studies conducted for the purpose of inquiry helps in deconstructing the notion of 'Place Identity' further. This chapter thus formulates an operative framework for systematically analysing Place Identity in an Indian context.

The second part of the chapter focuses on temporal spaces such as cultural event spaces and their role in identity construction of the city and the people involved. Cultural events are temporal phenomena which are celebrated in the public realm. They provide arenas for people to have shared experiences which makes the space for celebration meaningful. Their recurring and collective nature of cultural events manifesting in the physical environment adds a temporal significance to the static built environment. Setting these spaces apart from the everyday spaces, these temporal environments create a sense of place by bringing together the tangible and intangible elements which contribute to the perception of a place. Cultural events influence individual and social identities and adds to place meaning by creating a sense of localised time. This chapter defines the concept of cultural events, their role in society and their spatial manifestations, suggesting a framework for further analysis of cultural events in an Indian context.

2.1 Identity : A human need in an urbanised world

As cities in India move towards rapid urbanisation, certain urban complexities become indispensable components of their urban environment. One of the significant challenges faced by Indian cities is the increasing need to reinvent their image and identity. Indian cities have grown organically over the decades, with most having a traditional core. However, with globalisation and subsequent urbanisation, certain salient features of these cities have undergone adaptations more in sync with global aspirations. It is surprising to note that despite the homogenising forces of globalisation around the globe, Indian cities have retained their flair owing mainly to the cultural resurgence observed across many cities, especially tier-two cities (B. Singh, 2018). The challenge, though, lies in negotiating multiple such cultural resurgences owing mainly to the multicultural nature of these cities. Multifarious factors influence identity and make it a complex domain of study. Identity is a basic human need that forms the seed of interaction between self, others and society and forms a central theory in social psychology. However, another frequently overlooked entanglement is the relationship between identity and place. This overlook is more apparent when it concerns the notion of identity within festival research. This study specifically sought to explore this particular aspect of identity by analysing how festivals influence one's sense of identity individually and socially, the sense of belongingness to a collective identity and a place. In this literature review, the various interdisciplinary concepts of identity will be presented to emphasise these aspects of socio-spatiality embedded in identity. Discussions around identity, place and experiences will aim to comprehend this interrelationship and illuminate how it influences notions of identity. Drawing insights from these multiple aspects, this study will provide various perspectives offered by interdisciplinary research and their contribution to understanding the place and identity relationship.

2.2 Identity : Concepts from an Interdisciplinary approach

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2013), the philosopher, reiterates that our existence is spatial as we experience different spatial dimensions in our contemporary urban lives. These dimensions invade all realms of the physical, virtual, augmented and challenge the notion of place itself. Thus, the concepts of place have been reconceptualised by these very dimensions and understanding them becomes ever more significant in our quest for identity as they permeate

our everyday life and activities more than ever. According to another theorist, Christian Norberg-Schulz (1988), 'identification' and 'orientation' are two fundamental psychological functions that remain integral to people's existence. The author emphasises that identification is the basis of people's sense of belonging and orientation is what enables them to move connected by the common notion of place. This confirms the notion of identity as a primary human need that allows people to feel attached to a particular place. Identity forms the social bridge that connects the self to others, the inside to the outside, and the personal to the public (Karlsen, 2007). According to Snow (2001), three levels of identity may be perceived: personal, social, and collective. To situate oneself in the social space, these three levels of identity interplay according to the context. Personal identities relate to the self when situated in relation to others, self-attributed and regarded as personally distinctive. They are self-attributes and designations imparted to others in the social space, "those aspects of the self that differentiate the self from all others" (Brewer & Gardner, 1996, p. 83). Extending this sense of identity to social self or social identity becomes a fundamental process after the realisation of one's personal identity (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Social identity can be inferred at two levels "those that derive from interpersonal relations and interdependence with specific others, and those that derive from membership in larger organisations" (Brewer & Gardner, 1996, p. 83). They are, respectively, interpersonal and collective identities capturing a shared essence of belonging together in a group. The level of intimacy varies as in interpersonal identity, the level and frequency of actual contact is high as compared to collective identity which may not require personal relationships. The explanations about identity also differ when read between disciplines. Werff (1985) describes the sense of identity from a psychological perspective as "the awareness of continuously being one and the same person distinct from all others" whereas Yi-Fy Tuan (1997), a human geographer, explains the need for humans to be special yet at a deep level, this can lead to disconnectedness, loneliness, and vulnerability. Thus, he reiterates that submerging oneself in a group is an escape mechanism from singularity and is a compelling human need (Y. F. Tuan, 1997). While one from a psychological perspective stresses individualistic and internal processing of mind, the latter from a human geographical standpoint, emphasises the socio-cultural response by individuals. Moreover, Baumeister and Leary (1995) further adds to this debate by stating that "human beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships" (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p.

497). This implies the imperative need of individuals for frequent interactions with others that corroborates within a framework of shared concern for each other's welfare. On this basis, Baumeister and Leary (1995) argue that individuals are prone to forming meaningful bonds with each other that they hesitate to break easily while applying much of their cognitive resources to forming social connections, and reacting aversively when they are deprived of this belongingness. They recapitulate their hypothesis by explaining that "many aspects of human culture are directly and functionally linked to enabling people to satisfy the psychological need to belong" (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 521). The concept of identity from a collective perspective has also been the focus from the historian's point of view as particular groups over time have raised questions on national, cultural, ethnic, religious or class identities at a certain point in time which forms the basis for determinants of social and political behaviour (Mitzman, 1994). This concept can be extended to questions of collective identity at local, regional and national identity, thus expanding on space and time. In her book *Locating Urban Conflicts: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Everyday*, Wendy Pullan (Pullan et al., 2013), emphasises the need to recognise spatial dynamics, which is generally overlooked in conflicts of identity that are ethnic, national and religious, thus disclosing how physical context is innately connected in influencing identity in the socio-cultural scenario.

In recent discussions within environmental psychology, Dixon & Durrheim (2000) hypothesise that places are dynamic arenas that are 'both socially constituted and constitutive of the social' and addresses the fundamental question of 'who we are' as intimately related to 'where we are'. This adds a new dimension towards the study of identity concepts wherein place plays an ever-increasing role in our notions of who we are. Korpela (1989), defines place identity as : “. . . *cognitions of those physical settings and parts of the physical environment, in or with which an individual—consciously or unconsciously— regulates his experience of maintaining his sense of self. . . . This formulation does not necessarily limit a person’s place identity to home and its surroundings but applies to every physical environment and object that has a role in one’s self regulation. . . . Place-belongingness is not only one aspect of place identity, but a necessary basis of it. Around this core the social, cultural and biological definitions and cognitions of the place which become part of the person’s place identity are built.*”

Dixon & Durrheim (2000) views place identity as "a psychological structure that arises out of individuals' attempts to regulate their environments" thus situating place identity as a part of

personal identities with dynamic needs towards place attachment. This interrelationship may further extend to affiliation with the environment and other people through place-people interactions (Hammitt et al., 2006). In conclusion, place attachment maybe composed of place identity, dependence, familiarity, belongingness, and rootedness (Hammitt et al., 2006). As long as people carry impressions of their languages, culture and histories, their personal identities will remain rooted in culture and to place (Hall, 1992). According to Lefebvre, the very roots of social relationship is embedded in spatiality itself as he quotes :

“What exactly is the mode of existence of social relationships? The study of space offers an answer according to which the social relations of production have a social existence to the extent that they have a spatial existence; they project themselves into a space, becoming inscribed there, and in the process producing the space itself. Failing this the relations would remain in the realm of pure abstraction” (Lefebvre, 1991)

Conversely, Richard Steadman states that place itself is laden with meaning and aids in the construction of social meanings derived from experience with the environment forming a strong ‘social construction’ (Stedman, 2011).

In conclusion, identity as a concept can be understood from varied interdisciplinary stances relevant among which, psychology refers largely to the individual as the core while historical and sociological studies focus on collective identity. One of the most important inference from the literature is the recognition of identity as psychosocial, the interrelation between self and others, inner and outer, social factors and individual thought and behaviour (Josselson, 1994). Thus, one can draw parallels between identity and spatiality by considering the significance of socio-spatiality as a context that situates identity as a response to and interaction with the physical environment.

2.3 Significance of ‘space’, ‘place’ and ‘identity’ relationship

Space & Place are key terms used in the research extensively. The notion of space and place discussed here is used interchangeably to denote and emphasise the physical context in place identity. Place or physical settings have not been the subject of serious consideration in identity studies. Figure 2.1 illustrates the evolution that has happened in spatial thinking wherein space

has evolved from the initial concepts of absolute space to the present issues of 'placelessness' and initiating the explorations of place identity studies. As Edward Casey (2009) laments, 'nothing we do is unplaced and how could we fail to recognise this primal fact'. This emotion is further reiterated by Jeff Malpas (2012), who emphasises the importance of spatiality as a fundamental concept of any domain and hence a prerequisite for studying any phenomenon in any domain. The notion of existential meaning production itself is based on people's interaction with the physical environment. Christian Norberg Schulz (2019) explains how identity is embedded in place through how people unselfconsciously incorporate place when they talk about who they are such as 'I am a New Yorker'. As this research proposed to explore the role of event spaces in reinforcing Place Identity, it was imperative to understand the theoretical discourse on 'space' and 'place' for an essential base. The theoretical construct of Place Identity was investigated to derive the framework for the conduct of the research.

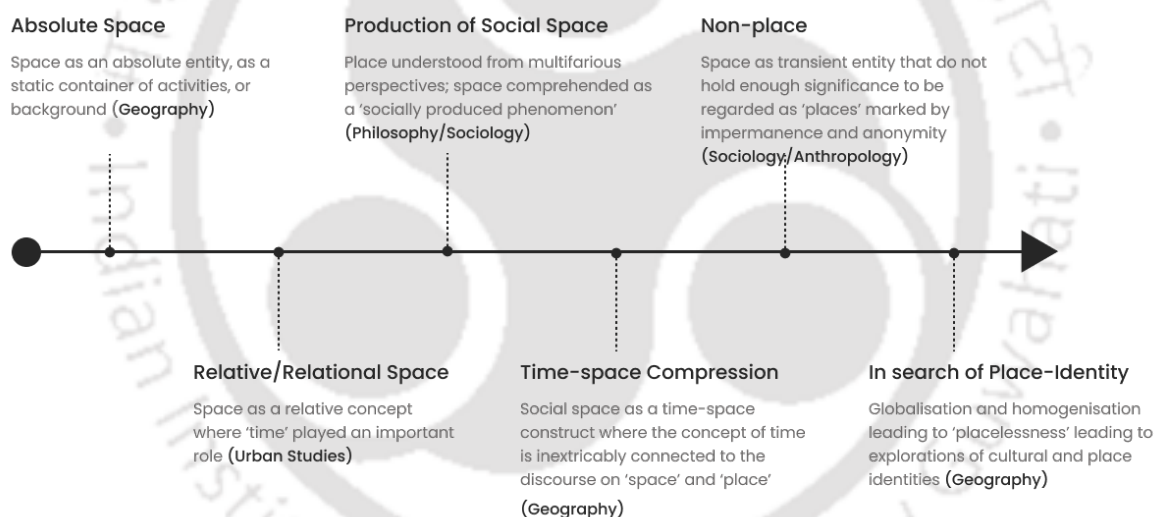


Figure 2.1: Evolution of spatial thinking

2.4 The construction of Place Identity : Emerging notions of identity and place

The physical environment has hardly been the focus of studying identity and is largely considered only in the backdrop wherein activities occur. One of the key concepts investigated in this research is the concept of space or the notion of space and its significance in terms of

identity. Many seminal authors have emphasised the need to consider space as one of the driving forces behind the manifestation of identity. Philosophers Edward Casey (2009) and Jeff Malpas (2012) considers space as the primal and fundamental concept in the study of any domain and our very existence. Christian Norberg Schulz (2019) further adds to it by reiterating how identity is embedded in our subconscious and a part of our existential meaning production. He refers to how people usually mention their place of origin when talking about themselves instead of mentioning their occupation or beliefs, thus placing human identity as a function of places and things. He concludes by saying that human identity presupposes the identity of place.

Spaces invoke human responses and enable the development of a relationship between people and places that is flexible by nature. A place is multisensorial in nature and can be experienced through visual, acoustic, olfactory, taste and haptic perceptions apart from involving physical, perceptual, cognitive, psychological and social experiences. The environment around us evokes complex human responses such as feelings, attitudes, values, desires, and expectancies that form the basis for understanding their relationship to an individual's experience and behaviour (Proshansky et al., 1970). This throws light on the interrelationship between people, place and the activities that occur within while asserting the crucial role of the environment in influencing and understanding an individual's experience and development of identity. Irwin Altman (1992), a social psychologist, categorises three ways to understand this interrelationship between the physical environment, social relationships and psychological processes:

- i. as an independent variable
- ii. as an aspect of behaviour
- iii. as a context or setting within which these interrelationships are embedded.

Altman emphasises the third aspect of the interrelationship as crucial as the physical environment becomes 'part of the definition and meaning of the phenomenon' (Altman, 1992) wherein place and people interact thus forging a transactional relationship. Furthermore adding on the significance of the quality of such relations, Robert Gifford (2014) explains: 'every aspect of human existences occurs in one environment or another and the transactions with and within them have important consequences both for people and their natural and built worlds'. Such transactions lay the foundation on which people develop a sense of identity.

2.5 The dimensions of place-identity

Various constructs pertaining to spatial construct of 'place' and identity have been explored through an interdisciplinary approach and the processes of formation of meaning through such spatial configurations have also been researched extensively in literature. Notions of place are embedded in people's construct of their identity and various elements in the environment contribute towards it. Various terminologies such as 'place attachment', 'place memory', 'place image'. 'Place identity', 'sense of place', and likewise have been used extensively to understand people-place interrelationships. Further probing of these typologies reveals that they are interrelated and not mutually exclusive. Scholars from various disciplines have tried to theorise the concept of 'Place-identity' and its formation process (Breakwell, 1983; Hague & Jenkins, 2004; Proshansky, 1978; Sepe, 2013; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996).

Place-identity is the most frequently discussed concept linking place and identity and as Proshansky et al. explains, that it is 'another aspect of identity comparable to social identity which describes the person's socialisation with the physical world' (Proshansky et al., 1970). Gifford (2014) explains that place identity 'develops when individuals experience similarities between self and place and incorporate cognitions about the physical environment (memories, thoughts, values, preferences, and categorizations) into their self-definitions'. Twigger-Ross & Uzzell (1996) consider place identification as a type of social identification which can only partially explain the relationship between identity and place. Osretis Droseltis & Vivian Vignoles (2010), identified four main conceptualisations between place and identity: self-extension, environmental fit, place-self congruity and emotional attachment. According to them, self-extension is the cognitive sense of place and an extension of the concept of self. Environmental fit refers to the environmental sense of the self as fitting and belonging to that environment. The third concept, place-self congruency involves the notion that 'a place is similar to, or consistent with, the image one has of one's characteristics as an individual'. The final concept, emotional attachment, embraces the concept of emotional bonding and positive feelings towards a place. Thus, place-identity as a concept is dynamic, and constantly evolving as a product of interaction a person with the environment for a particular duration. Proshansky (1978) observes that place-identity is 'a potpourri of memories, conceptions, interpretations, ideas and related feelings about specific physical setting, as well as types of settings. It is comprised of perceptions and comprehensions'.

In order to evaluate these concepts derived from literature in the Indian context, a perception study was conducted which forms a part of the preliminary study of the research.

In social psychology, research on identity is dominated by two schools of thought, namely Social Identity Theory and Identity Theory. Social Identity Theory posits that identity formation is an 'end product' or 'outcome' of certain events (Zhang & Huxham, 2009). This school of thought also considers the role of social experiences, especially when in a group as it presents a theory that an individual's behaviour is impacted by group relations (Hammack, 2008). With its roots in George Herbert Mead's framework (1962), Identity Theory emphasised that society shapes one's self which in turn shapes one's social behaviour. According to Identity Theory, the core of an identity is the self and the incorporation of the meanings and expectations associated with that role, and its performance (Burke & Tully, 1977). Thus, Social Identity Theory focuses on 'category based' identities whereas, Identity Theory focuses on 'role based' identities.

However, pertaining to this research, another identity theory which illuminates the wide range of identity issues is the Identity Process Theory. Identity Process Theory was proposed by Blackwell as four guiding principles for formation of Identity, which are 'Continuity', 'Distinctiveness', 'Self Esteem' and 'Self Efficacy' (Breakwell, 1983; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). She observes that places have fluid meanings with symbols having embedded meanings and significance which are constantly negotiated and thus their role is ever evolving. These guiding principles under Identity Process Theory can also be seen as motives. Various studies in social psychology have explored Breakwell's Identity Process Theory (1983) and motives as crucial towards forming one's identity. Identity Motives Theory, understands that an individual's behaviour generally seems to be affected by private interpretations of the contexts within which they occur instead of just perceiving it as simply being directed by socio-cultural factors (Strauss, 1992). D'Andrade (1992) observed that the environment itself is not sufficient to explain human behaviour and argued that culture only serves as a stimulus for human actions. According to him, there are other explanations to why certain environmental factors are embraced by some individuals, yet rejected by others. Vignoles et al. (2006) clarified that although people may not necessarily be aware of it, there are certain motives or reasons behind why certain identities may be developed as opposed to others. One theory that integrates both

Identity Process Theory and identity motives is the Motivated Identity Construction theory which identifies six guiding motives for identity construction; Distinctiveness, Meaning, Continuity, Belonging, Self-esteem and Efficacy.

The concept of 'place memory' has been discussed by Hayden (1995) and Hilton (2005) through 'urban reminders' which exist in the physical environment which act as reminders for collective memory. Lewicka (2008) establishes that Place memory' and 'Place attachment' are theoretical constructs which inform Place identity and need to be considered parallelly. In his essay titled 'Planning and Place Identity', Hague (2004) discusses the formation of place identity through three processes. The first instance of the formation of a person's idea of a place is through what they hear from others. This idea is refined as a person gets familiar with the place and finally other factors such as age, gender, class, ethnicity, education, and occupation shape people's perception of a place. For the purpose of this research, Place-Identity was categorised into three processes of Place Meaning, Place Attachment and Place Experience, sieved through literature and preliminary interviews which are a part of the preliminary study. This also formed the basis for the conduct of the primary case studies.

2.5.1 Place meaning

The cognitive dimension of place or Place meaning, is the process of spatial cognition through acquiring knowledge of a place and constructing meanings based on the perception, comprehension and sensory experiences. Spatial information could be acquired through various sources such as through narratives of the place, historical background, the built fabric and the experiences one has in it. Perception is a complex process that might not be a reflection of the real world (Rapaport, 1977). An individual perceives the spatial environment through certain filters such as cultural, personal, and others which distorts their perception of the real world facts. The process of place meaning through spatial cognition is mainly achieved through the following aspects : Sensory engagement with place , Distinctiveness making sense of place, Continuity through place invariants, Historical Knowledge of the place, Narratives adding symbolic meaning to place.

2.5.1.1 Sensory engagement with place

An individual primarily interacts with his surroundings through his five senses which allows a coherent understanding of the environment. Over time, these multisensory experiences add meaning to a place, thus creating a unique identity of the place. However, sensory perception varies from individual to individual as each person has a different sensory experience in the same physical setting (Cross, 2015). These differences could arise from an individual's personal choices based on their cultural background, value system, previous experiences and other such parameters. Thus, the meanings attached to a physical setting is quite unique to an individual. Thus, any change to the sensory experience of an environment, the related meanings of the place changes which can either enhance or reduce the meanings associated to the place.

Most of the respondents were able to narrate their place memories which involved the sensory engagement of the visual, acoustic, tactile, and olfactory experiences. As one respondent fondly recalls the various places she used to visit in the city and the activities that she performed there.

I love Guwahati for its lovely mouth watering cuisine and the sheer variety of food palette that it has to offer. I remember going for Durga Puja shopping with my parents to Fancy Bazar, which was incomplete without stopping for chai and samosa in Lakhi Cabin. Later on we would stop by Shaikh Brothers to pick up desserts and their deliciously famous bread loaves. Since my school was located in the heart of Panbazar, my friends and I used to eat frequently in the nearby fast food joints. Even though, eventually, I moved out of the city for attending college, these memories of gulping down hot momos on rainy days, or eating gol-gappas on a hot summery day, have remained with me. Now, whenever I go back to my city, it's impossible to resist these temptations.

In literature more focus has been given to the importance of vision, which was strongly refuted by Ittelson (1978) and Joel Richeimer (2006). However, in the context of Indian festivals, all the five senses are equally important due to the multisensory nature of the Indian cities. Sensory engagement with place carries a strong impact and is central to describing a place itself.

Another respondent recalls the calming feeling of spending time in the midst of nature in Guwahati comparing the experience as akin to 'restorative experience'.

The description of Guwahati is incomplete without mentioning the mighty Brahmaputra coursing throughout the city. I relate the river to a sense of calmness unlike the turbulent nature that it is associated with. The green hills framing the river provides such a beautiful contrast especially during sunset. The sunsets are almost magical here and on many evenings I have driven down the road across Belleveu towards Raj Bhavan to catch a glimpse of it. You can watch the sun go down and all your worries seem to vanish for a while as you catch a break. That's how I visualise an ideal day would be in my city.

2.5.1.2 Distinctiveness making sense of place

Distinctiveness refers to a place or city that can be distinguished from other cities (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996) and is related to the positive perception of the uniqueness of a place (Lalli, 1992). Norberg Schulz discusses the attribution of character to a place through the various elements of the city thus giving it a sense of place. According to him, the character of a place also comprises the temporal changes that occur due to seasonal, diurnal or natural factors like climatic changes, vegetation or human interactions in the environment. The natural features can impart an unique identity and 'sense of place'. Breakwell compared major theories of place identity as developed by Lalli (1992), Lynch (1960), Twigger-ross & Uzzell (1996) and concluded that there are four variables to investigate distinctiveness aspect in defining place identity which are, landmark, uniqueness, particular character and different perception as distinctiveness variables that reflect the image of a place. Breakwell, Ross & Uzzell also associate 'distinctiveness' as quality manifested in a person due to his spatial association (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). Thus, in Place-identity, this distinctiveness in characteristics is often visible in the way people take pride in their belongingness to a place.

In the context of this research, distinctiveness has been defined in spatial terms inorder to understand the spatial attributes of a place which is adopted by people consciously or unconsciously.

One of the respondents talked about the unique blend of nature and culture that are distinct markers of the city.

With its unique landscape, surrounded by hills and the river Brahmaputra coursing through it, Guwahati mesmerises anyone who visits this city.....Apart from the natural beauty, Guwahati

also has many colonial era buildings which are known as Assam type houses and are very unique to the region.

2.5.1.3 Continuity through place invariants

The physical fabric of cities contains certain elements which seem to exist since eternity and imparts meaning to the built. These elements are usually unique to a city which every resident would relate and associate with. As these invariants have existed since generations, they weave together different eras of history. As cities are constantly transforming, these invariants preserved in the built fabric of cities are essential to retain the unique essence of cities (Sepe, 2013). It is thus important to identify such invariants in a place and adapt them to the changing urban needs. Sepe (2013) interprets such invariants as tools for communication amongst generations.

A resident muses about the changing face of Guwahati and how the essence of the city is being redefined as time changes.

The city of Guwahati has undergone rapid urbanisation, and migration of people from various states. However, as the city grows, with the influx of people, the city has assumed a new image. New festivals are emerging in the city as people from various cultural identities have started celebrating their festivals here. Especially in the month of June, every year for many generations, devotees start arriving at the Kamakhya temple from all over the world for the celebration of the Ambubachi Mela. Since then, the mela has grown by manifolds as each year the number of devotees have increased exponentially.

The migration of different cultural groups into the city over time and their certain economic activities, the attachments to ethnic, religious and linguistic identity have manifested in the form of many community centric settlements. This has led a multifaceted identity to Guwahati city. The transformations of the city as a result of economic growth and a by-product of globalised elements, has influenced the city to re-imagine its form, symbols and monuments as a global city inscribed in history.

2.5.1.4 Historical Knowledge of the place

Cities are constantly changing due to various socio-political reasons such as politics, wars, migration of people, globalisation and natural disasters, etc. Thus there are layers of history that a city is buried under. Awareness about these historical events of a place through various published materials, documentaries, oral histories, staged events, etc., instils a sense of pride among the residents and enhances people-place bonds (Hayden, 1995; Lewicka, 2005).

As can be observed in one of the descriptions about the history of his hometown Guwahati, one of the respondents recalls the diverse elements in the city which are replete with the history of Guwahati and their importance and relevance.

2.5.1.5 Narratives adding symbolic meaning to place

Narratives in the form of legends, myths, oral traditions around a place give a symbolic meaning to a place and a distinct cultural identity.

"Telling stories is as basic to human beings as eating. More so, in fact, for while food makes us live, stories are what make our lives worth living" — On Stories, by Richard Kearney.

Cross (2015) emphasises the importance of maintaining the continuity of narrating stories as a process of creation of history. Often these narratives adapt to accommodate changing ideologies and new meanings. A sense of cultural insideness and belongingness is infused in people once they become aware of the place history through these narratives. Most of the place-origin based narratives are myths which are further fortified through ancestral accounts and political histories. Narratives act as the bridge between time and space as they are passed on through generations. Most of the spiritual cities in India have a mythical realm, wherein people become rooted in that realm which eventually becomes part of their self-identity. In her book on Banaras, Diana Eck (1999) talks about the place hymns which glorify the various sacred elements of the holy city which bestows symbolic meaning to the place. Altman & Low (1992) refers to this as the 'Cosmological Place Attachment' which is the religious and mythical representation of the various elements of the physical fabric of a place due to which people associate to that place. However, the symbolic meanings of places through which place cognition occurs, is an ever evolving entity as new narratives get added with time. People will

eventually retell these stories by adding or removing many aspects as certain narratives will be emphasised while few others will be undermined, making it a very fluid construct.

One of the participants talked about the narrative, various myths and symbolism spread across the city of Guwahati.

It is an ancient city and finds mention in the ancient Puranas. There are many ancient temples such as Kamakhya Temple, Ugratara and many more. Kamakhya Temple, is one of the oldest Adi peetha (earliest shrine) in India. Among all the Shakti peethas in the world, Kamakhya is considered the foremost from which a network of other peethas and shrines emerged. There are many myths surrounding the origin of Kamakhya Temple as mentioned in the Kalika Purana.

The ancient city of Guwahati is rooted in many myths and symbolism that goes back to its origin. The representational spaces created by the narratives of the respondents attributes meanings to the spatial structure of the city. The Kamakhya Temple, Ugratara Temple which are some of the renowned temples in the city are replete with narratives related to every element within the precinct. The festival of Ambubachi celebrated in the Kamakhya Temple premises is also associated with various spatial elements through its narratives. These narratives which add layers of meaning to the spatial elements impart a distinctive cohesive identity to the place. These narratives, passed on through generations, through oral storytelling, poems, texts, play a significant role in fostering a collective feeling of existential insideness amongst the residents.

2.5.1.6 Summary

Fig. 2.2 summarises the entire process of formation of attributes by depicting the various terminologies floated by prominent researchers studying the dimension of place cognition to arrive at five distinct attributes of formation of Place Meaning. These five attributes are further utilised in the contextual exploration of the research.

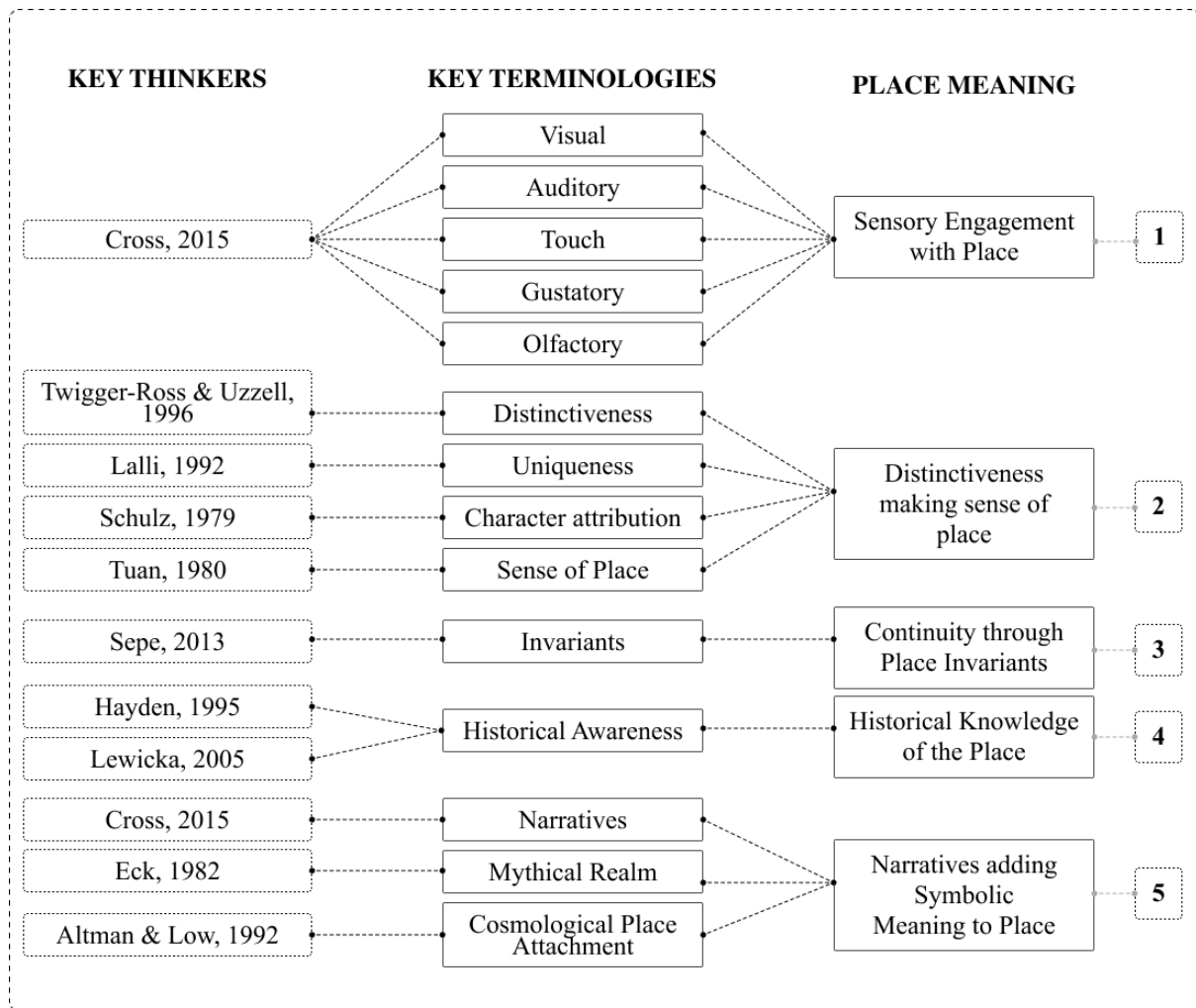


Figure 2.2: Attributes contributing to formation of place meaning

2.5.2 Place attachment

Place attachment is the process of developing emotional belonging to a specific place (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2004). Altman and Low (1992) describe place attachment as people-place relationships formed as a result of the cultural ties to the physical fabric of a place due to the individual and collective meanings imparted to specific elements in that place. Most of the literature in place attachment focusses on experimental, historical, psychological and cultural aspects of places that affect the unconscious (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2004). However, people can also feel desire or attachment to places that they have never been to before which could be a place sacred to them (Low, 1992, p. 166). Relph (1976) emphasises that the concept

of feeling of 'inside' and 'outside' a place is intrinsically related to their extent of feeling belongingness to a place.

Scannell & Gifford (2010) proposed the Tripartite model (Fig. 2.2) which is a multidimensional framework for place attachment with person, psychological process, and place dimensions. Their model proposes that place attachment through personal dimension can occur at both the individual and group levels. At an individual level, it involves the personal connections one has with a place while at a collective or group level, attachment comprises the symbolic meanings of the place shared among the group members (Low, 1992).

Apart from the above, place attachment maybe religiously based. Religion elevates the meaning of certain places to sacred (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2004). Religion and place attachment share a strong relationship as religion pervades and affects people's way of life. Mazumdar and Mazumdar (2004) proposes a conceptual model (Fig. 2.3) to decipher the connections between religion, place, identity and attachment. There are three indicators that affect each other in this model which discusses the various social, physical, individual and collective factors which influence religious place attachment.

All in all, from literature it can be deduced that place attachment aids in the creation of self-identity through the aspects of religion, culture, history, experience and psychology. Thus, the following factors were sieved from literature which affect place attachment. They are: Historical Attachment to place, Emotional Attachment to place, Material dependence of place, Urban reminders of place, Collective Memory and Spiritual Attachment to place.

2.5.2.1 Historical attachment to Place

Historical attachment is the process of gathering experience in a place and creating meaning from those experiences which ties life events to a particular place as well as the history of a place. This process of attachment comprises of two components, the experience of life in a place and the narratives that create meaning about those experiences. The substantial amount of time an individual has been in a place, having ancestral roots in the place and culturally belonging to the place affects how they identify with the place. Through narratives of one's ancestors, various linkages to places and historical experiences of the family gets transferred to the next generation. These narratives add meaning to the places and a sense of belongingness.

Altman & Low (1992) call it ‘Genealogical Place Attachment’ which refers to a engagement between people and place based on family and historical ties that are embedded with the history of the place. Low argued that the genealogical process “commonly occurs in in traditional peasant communities where the relationship of the inhabitants and their village been established for centuries” (Low, 1992). This kind of association is only possible for people who has inhabited a place for generations. This may not hold true in the present context where people have been displaced across the world and creating new histories. A person’s life events maybe focussed only on their individual experiences, or it may be an accumulation of their family’s history, or it may be a part of the culture they belong to. Hay (1998) calls this as ‘ancestral sense of place’ which is formed through generations living in the place and forming a ‘cultural sense of place’. Cross (2015) refers to this process as the ‘historical process’ as shown in Figure 2.4. Nonetheless, the various levels of historical attachment, are simply the same attachment process of linkage to place through experiencing ordinary and defining events seeped in individual, familial or cultural history (Cross, 2015).

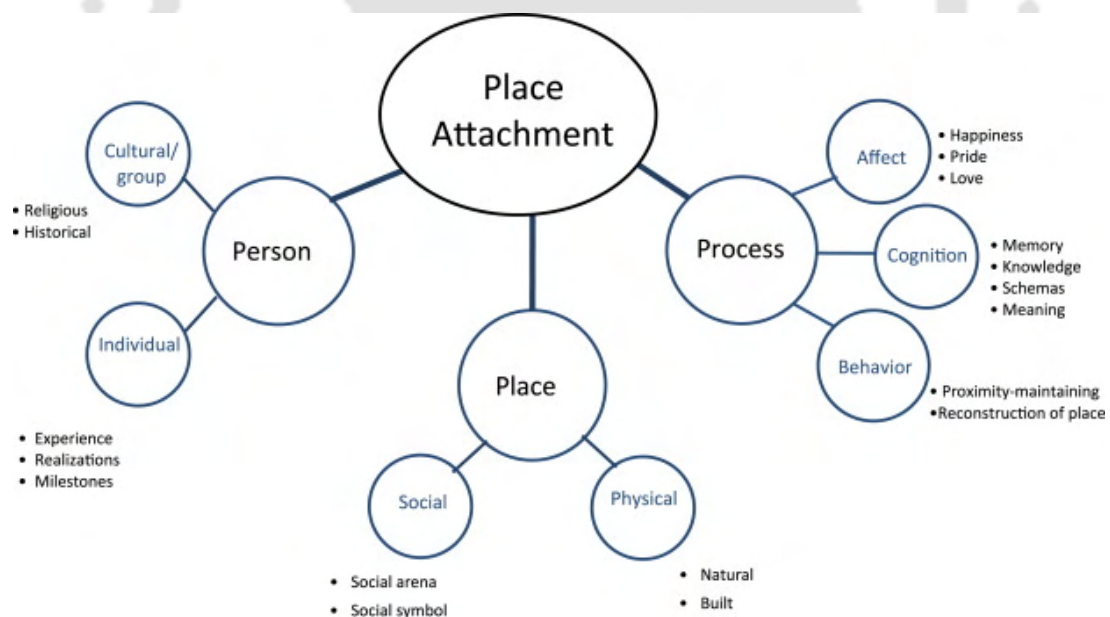


Figure 2.3: The tripartite model of place attachment. (Scannell & Gifford, 2010)

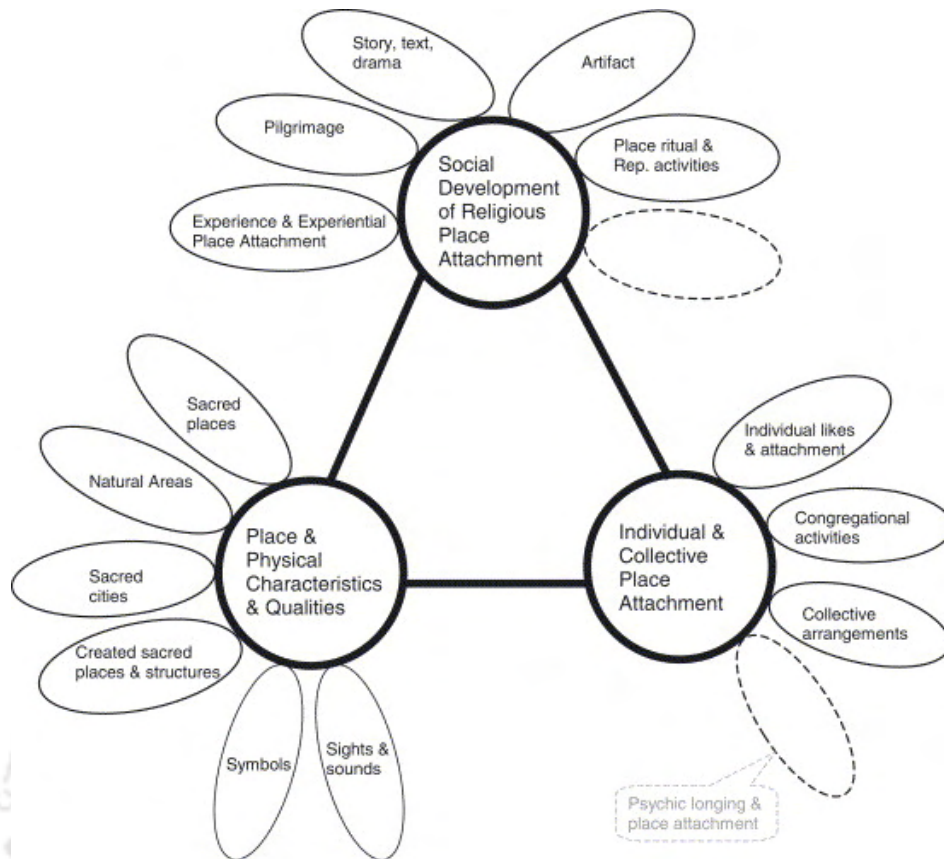


Figure 2.4: Religious place attachment: a model (Source: Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2004)

One of the participant describes the city she grew up in as an integral part of her childhood memories :

The city is a continual reminder of where my roots are planted and where generations of my family have been settled in. In a way it defines my origin. Sometimes it fascinates me how different generations of my family have been a witness to the drastically changing landscape of the city through these years.

The physical settings of the city are implicitly connected to the respondent's sense of self and identity. It also acts as the backdrop where generations of her family's narratives have played out.

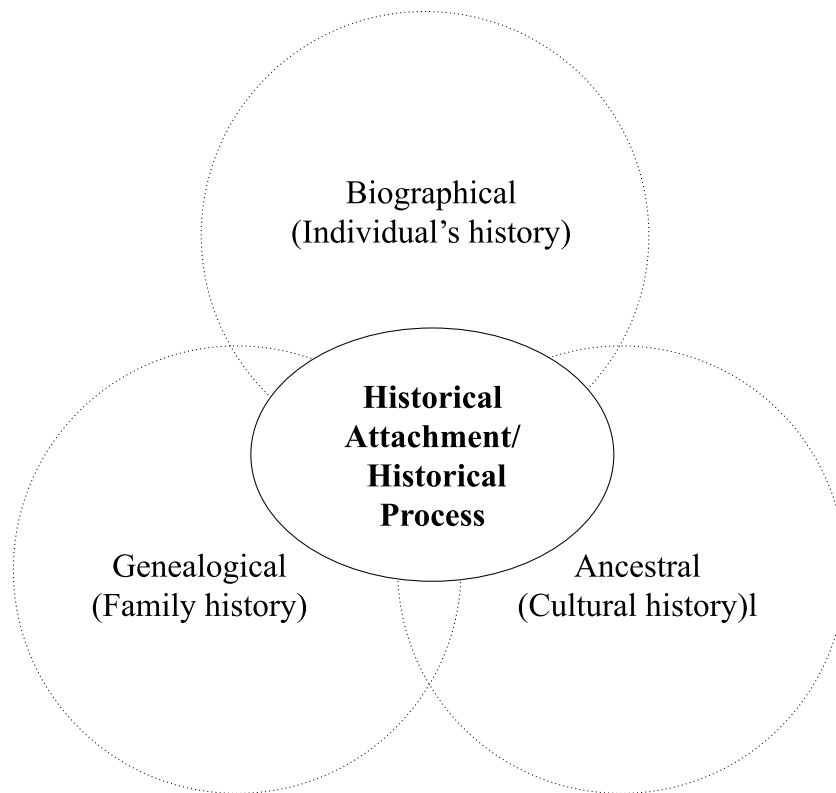


Figure 2.5: Process of Historical Attachment (Source: Cross, 2015)

2.5.2.2 *Emotional Attachment to place*

The existing literature on emotional attachment identifies it as one aspect of sense of place as a result of the dynamic relationship between individuals and the physical environment (Altman & Low, 1992; Hashemnezhad et al., 2013; Qazimi, 2014; Y. F. Tuan, 1975). The term ‘topophilia’ or ‘love of place’ was coined by Tuan (1974) to define the emotional bonding between people-place. Relph (1976) defines place attachment as the authentic and emotional bond with a place that satisfies a fundamental human need. The relationship with a place can represent varied forms of emotions ranging from love and contentment to fear, hatred, and ambivalence (Manzo, 2005). It is also intrinsically with the feeling of detachment and loss, when in the event of natural disaster, war, immigration or relocation, individuals have to leave their places. This scenario is what Relph (1976) refers to as ‘placelessness’ which detaches people from a place. In such scenarios, people try to reconstruct places in the past from their memories to recuperate with their feeling of loss. Low (1992) argues that this kind of place

attachment through the feeling of loss or destruction of a place is an integral part of place identity.

As a participant explains the feeling of loss when he lived away from his city of origin for a considerable amount of time.

I have roamed and resided in more than 20 states in India and no other state could give me this sense of fulfilment or connection that I feel with this city. Guwahati holds everything dear to me; my family, best friends - all belong to Guwahati. I have my best memories of childhood here and words seem less when I try to praise this city. To summarise all, I am content when I am in Guwahati.

The feeling of loss was an aspect which resonated more with the elderly residents, owing to their exposure to the changes happening over time and their sensitivity towards it. Though Guwahati has a very slow pace of urbanisation, there are nonetheless changes which are evident when observed over the years. Most of these changes are intangible in nature such as cultural change that has happened as a result of exposure to the outside world. There have been many instances where commercialisation of culture has overshadowed the very essence of their culture.

Guwahati, once a beautiful city, is not suitable for living. Answer lies in the above, how can we revive its glorious past again and make it a place worth living. So long its residents are not committed, it will never grow, rather it will continue to deteriorate further.

2.5.2.3 Place dependence

The dependence on place has been the subject of discussion under various studies in place attachment. Place dependence as a concept is the potential of a place to fulfil the needs and aspirations of an individual in a particular physical setting and hence the association with a place or other similar functioning settings (Kyle et al., 2005; Stokols & Shumaker, 1987; Williams et al., 1992). It includes reliance on fundamental material needs such as housing, education and work. However, Cross (2015) argues that, the ideas of 'Place dependence' needs to be expanded and redefined as 'Material dependence' which includes the reliance on material features of a place (housing, job, geographic location) as well as the material and social reliance

on others (family, friends, etc.) for their personal wellbeing. The extent of dependence depends on how an individual assesses the quality of a place while comparing it to other places satisfying similar needs. This sense of place attachment is a dynamic construct and keeps on evolving with changing needs/aspirations of an individual.

I moved in with my family from upper Assam to this place in 2003 for my father's job and my education, and have lived here ever since. The Kamakhya Temple holds a special place in my life because my family has a custom of going there at the beginning of each new year. I attended school and college here, where I also made some incredible friends with whom I have visited many cafes and created unforgettable experiences.

Place dependence is an integral aspect that affects an individual's decision regarding their choice of educational institute, neighbourhood, to vacation spots (Cross, 2015). Hence, the ability to choose a place to fulfil any of the fundamental requirements of residence, education, etc. is rarely devoid of the material and social considerations and people evaluate places like commodities while making their decisions. Cross (2015) terms it as the 'commodifying process' of place relationships. This form of material dependence thus limits an individual's choices which in turn may create negative affective experiences, while fostering historical bonds at the same time. Seamon (2014) terms such a complicated process of place attachment as the experience of 'lived opposites' of place attachment.

2.5.2.4 Urban reminders of place

The urban reminders of a place are the socially constructed elements of a city that hold symbolic messages of the city's past in the form of monuments, landmarks, place names, etc. which act as markers of past events in the urban landscape. These reminders can be *tangible reminders* such as architecture, or *intangible reminders* such as myths, constantly acting as mnemonic devices to the city's past in the everyday landscape. Some of these reminders could be just a small element on a wall while others could be an entire archaeological site. The intangible urban reminders constructed through folk tales and other urban stories morph over time (Lewicka, 2008). Thus, the symbolic messages about the city also evolve due to the fluid nature of the urban reminders.

According to one respondent of Guwahati, the city is riddled with many elements acting as urban reminders. Though, for her, the river stands out as a testimony to the various events witnessed by the city.

I associate Guwahati with the calmness of the mighty river and its banks, the smell of flowers from the stalls in the ghat, the ferry rides across the river, reminding us of tales of heroes of the bygone years who died fighting for the city and its people. My thoughts on Guwahati would be incomplete without the nostalgia of songs by Bhupen Hazarika.

The insider's perception of the city is dominated by the 'representational places' which largely comprises the tangible and intangible aspects of the city such as natural landscape, monuments, historical narrations, celebrations, rituals, spirituality, food, etc. which form some of the distinctive characteristics of the city culture. Aldo Rossi (1982), while discussing cities as 'historical texts', terms these elements as 'urban artefacts'. Lewicka (2008) further elaborates on urban reminders as leftovers from the previous generations inhabiting that place.

2.5.2.5 Place Memory

"Memory is a central, if not the central, medium through which identities are constituted." (Olick & Robbins, 1998). According to Neisser (1967) memory is an ongoing process of active construction based on traces left by past experiences. People can have varied recollection of the same occurrences which gets interpreted, encoded and embedded in their memory. They can also be triggered when there is a similar or related occurrence. Philosopher Edward Casey (2000) while questioning the process of formation of memory through place, event or person in place, highlights the place-bound quality of memories. Place memories offer significant valuable insights for the study of aspects of self-identity, as they possess intimate knowledge of an individual's lived experiences in everyday spaces. Place memory is created at the individual as well as the collective level. While personal memories consist of unique experiences of an individual, collective memories consist of shared experiences that establish a connection between people (Chang & Huang, 2005). Place memory is also created through performances like rituals, festivals, celebrations, events and public ceremonies (Connerton, 1989). This remembering is a collective social activity and instrumental for the construction of group identity by many scholars (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004).

“Cities serve as powerful symbols and repositories of memory” as Ladd (1997) pointed out. However, most of the studies about urban spaces in the city and collective memory depend on monumental spaces (Rose-Redwood et al., 2008). Stokols and Shumaker (1987) discusses the formation of ‘collectively held social meanings’ amongst the users of a place through the process of ‘social imageability’ of characteristics of such places. In his seminal work ‘On Collective Memory’, Maurice Halbwachs (1992) articulated the collective form of memory by coining the term ‘collective memory’. According to him, collective memory is a social construct and a product of the collective experiences of the city.

A respondent described his engagement with a place based on collective activities that he performed in a place along with his friends which in turn led to a collective memory for him.

I grew up here with lots of good memories, from hanging out with my friends to trying out new experiences, from jamming with my friends to going to concerts, each of these are precious memories. All my friends love music immensely and play a variety of musical instruments too.

Another respondent described her memories around festivals celebrated collectively with her family members.

It was always a time to greet and meet and eat a lot of food. It meant celebrating uruka and bihu with the entire family.

Hayden (1995), argues that identity is intricately linked to these various forms of individual, collective and social memories. The process of recollection of collective memory thus forms an association of the people with the places of manifestation of the events.

2.5.2.6 Spirit of a place

Schulz (1979) refers to the spirit or soul of a place as the unique, characteristic and esteemed essence of a place. Tangible and intangible attributes such as narratives, myths, place memories, histories, physical and natural landscape create this spirit of a place. Seamon (2014) calls this ‘Place realisation’ as the distinct character of a place that is known only to people who realise and appreciate the place which eventually enhances the sense of ‘Place Identity’.

Cross (2015) refers to the spiritual process of attachment as the profound sense of belonging an individual has with a place. However, this sense of belonging is not necessarily connected to religion or spirituality, though such aspects also add meanings to a place. This sense of attachment to a place is very intrinsic and embedded in an individual often termed as ‘oneness between the self and place’ and it is predominantly static as compared to other types of attachment.

As one respondent points out, the essence of Guwahati lies in its openness and small town feel. Being the hub for people of different ethnicities and cultural groups, the city is a manifestation of these diverse socio-cultural elements and truly multicultural in nature.

Guwahati is where my home is and where my family resides. It is naturally very scenic and the people from all the Northeastern and other states reside in this city thus making it a multicultural city. People here will trust you very easily once you strike a conversation with them. Everyone seems to know everyone or has some ties with someone they know as a common acquaintance. It gives you a sense of living in a small town rich in community life, a relaxed pace of life and a little chaotic atmosphere in general. Overall, people are very welcoming here, where you will still see people visiting each other's homes for elaborate dinners or just for a cup of tea. Though initially people might come across as intrusive, you feel a certain warmth after you understand the culture and assimilate yourself with its tradition.

2.5.2.7 Summary

Fig. 2.6 summarises the entire process of formation of attributes by depicting the various terminologies floated by prominent researchers studying the dimension of place affection to arrive at six distinct attributes of formation of Place Attachment. These six attributes are further utilised in the contextual exploration of the research.

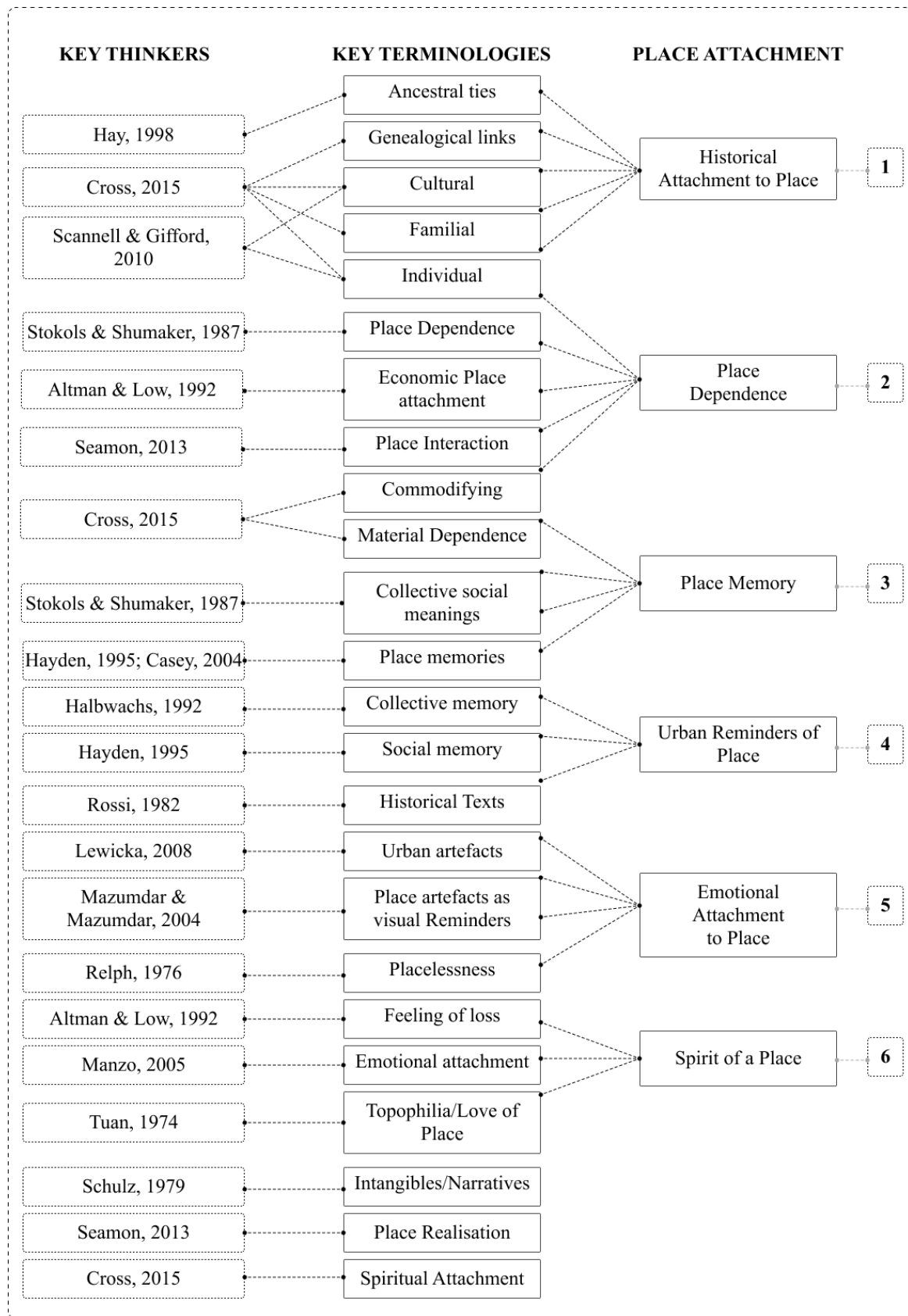


Figure 2.6: Attributes contributing to formation of place attachment

2.5.3 Place experience

The place cognition and attachment towards a place defines an individual's behaviour and impacts their decisions regarding how they experience an occurrence. The choices an individual makes based on their behaviour is connected to the place of knowledge and affect. People make these decisions on whether they want to participate in any events, choose between the types of experiences to partake in, compare between various places and evaluate their place and also at times contribute towards the building process of the city. Thus place experience or the conative dimension of place is discussed under the three aspects of participation in events as Place Engagement, Self-esteem and Self-efficacy and Place Creation. They are further elaborated through perception studies for each of the aspects under discussion.

2.5.3.1 Place Event Engagement

The physical built environment is the static palimpsest where the various temporal events occur. The occurrence of events in a place could be planned and elaborate as in the instance of festive events or they could be instantaneous occurrences in the everyday. The level of engagement could vary from person to person and purely dependent on an individual's personal choice. The decision to engage with the events of a place be it religious, spiritual, secular, occasional or just everyday displays the affective tie with the place and is dependent on the cognition of the place.

As one respondent fondly recalls the various places she used to visit in the city and her relationship with the city spaces.

A significant part of my childhood has been spent in the winters of Guwahati, where I spent my long winter vacation, escaping the chilling cold of Shillong. Going down to Guwahati meant no studies, no homework, no getting up in the morning or going to school; it meant family time, playing with cousins, visiting relatives, lunch and dinner invites, or going to Nehru Park or the Zoo, or for ice cream to Gems, opposite to the stadium. It meant roaming around with my aunt from one place to the other.

Seamon (2014) elaborates on the concept of 'place release' as the unexpected encounter with place episodes which involves 'environmental serendipity'. These small encounters could be a sudden meeting with an old friend or any performance on the streets, all of which create a sense

of pleasure. This experience, by leaving traces of pleasure through such engagements thus creates a sense of being a part of the place.

Low (1992) discusses people's desire to undertake pilgrimage or participate in cultural events of cities as a special link to a place due to the events occurring in the place or the spiritual connotations. Despite the temporal spatial existence, the impact is intense and leaves an everlasting impression on people's minds.

2.5.3.2 Self-Esteem & Self-Efficacy

Environmental psychology defines self-esteem and self-efficacy as two essential processes of place identity formation. Rosenberg (1979) describes Self Esteem as the positive or negative assessment that individuals have of themselves. Twigger and Ross (1996) mentions it as the positive evaluation of not just the self, but also to the social group which one identifies with. The quality of the place that an individual belongs to greatly impacts their self-esteem. Korpela (1989) expands on the value of the environment and shows how a favourite environment can support self-esteem. He gives the instance of how children experience a sense of positive self-esteem when they are in their own room during distressing times. A sense of pride through association with a historic place of importance can greatly boost a person's self-esteem via the qualities of the place (Lalli, 1992; Uzzell, 1995).

Twigger and Ross (1996) defines self-efficacy as the belief of an individual in their capabilities to overcome any situational demands. The sense of being in an environment that makes a person feel able and self-efficacious, helps in enhancing place identity and creates a positive experience of the place.

According to a respondent the presence of natural and various socio-cultural elements creates a sense of pride amongst the residents of the city. The exposure to the outside has made them aware of the inherent characteristics of the city, which is their distinct culture, tradition, dominance of nature, and unique crafts of the region. The celebration of various festivals celebrated in the realm of the city, are enriching experiences as recalled by the respondents.

I have been residing in this city (Guwahati) since my birth. I like this city due to various reasons. The beauty of the natural landscape, ancient roots, and the presence of various

temples makes this city truly unique. Another significant aspect of this region is the presence of several indigenous forms of craft and especially Assam Silk and Muga which are known worldwide.

2.5.3.3 Place Involvement

Relph's (2008) seven levels of experiential involvement/identification explains the essence of a place embedded 'in the experience of an inside that is distinct from an outside; more than anything else this is what sets places apart in space and defines a particular system of physical features, activities and the meanings'. His stance on understanding place experience is based in terms of people's experience of being 'inside' or 'outside' a place. Relph (2008) argues that the more profoundly 'inside' an individual experiences in a place, the stronger they identify with the place. He talks about 'empathetic insideness' which involves people empathising with what the place demonstrates and appreciating the essential elements of its identity.

Ross and Uzzell (1996) discusses people's desire to maintain continuity in the built environment through two types of continuity process : place-referent continuity and place-congruent continuity. They further elaborate on these two processes where 'Place-referent continuity' is the desire of people to conserve a place from transforming due to their emotional bond with the place. On the other hand, 'Place-congruent continuity' is when people try to replicate or use similar elements which reflect the characteristics of a place they appreciate to maintain continuity and the feeling of association to the original place.

2.5.3.4 Summary

Fig. 2.7 summarises the entire process of formation of attributes by depicting the various terminologies floated by prominent researchers studying the conative dimension of place to arrive at three distinct attributes affecting behaviour in place. These three attributes are further utilised in the contextual exploration of the research.

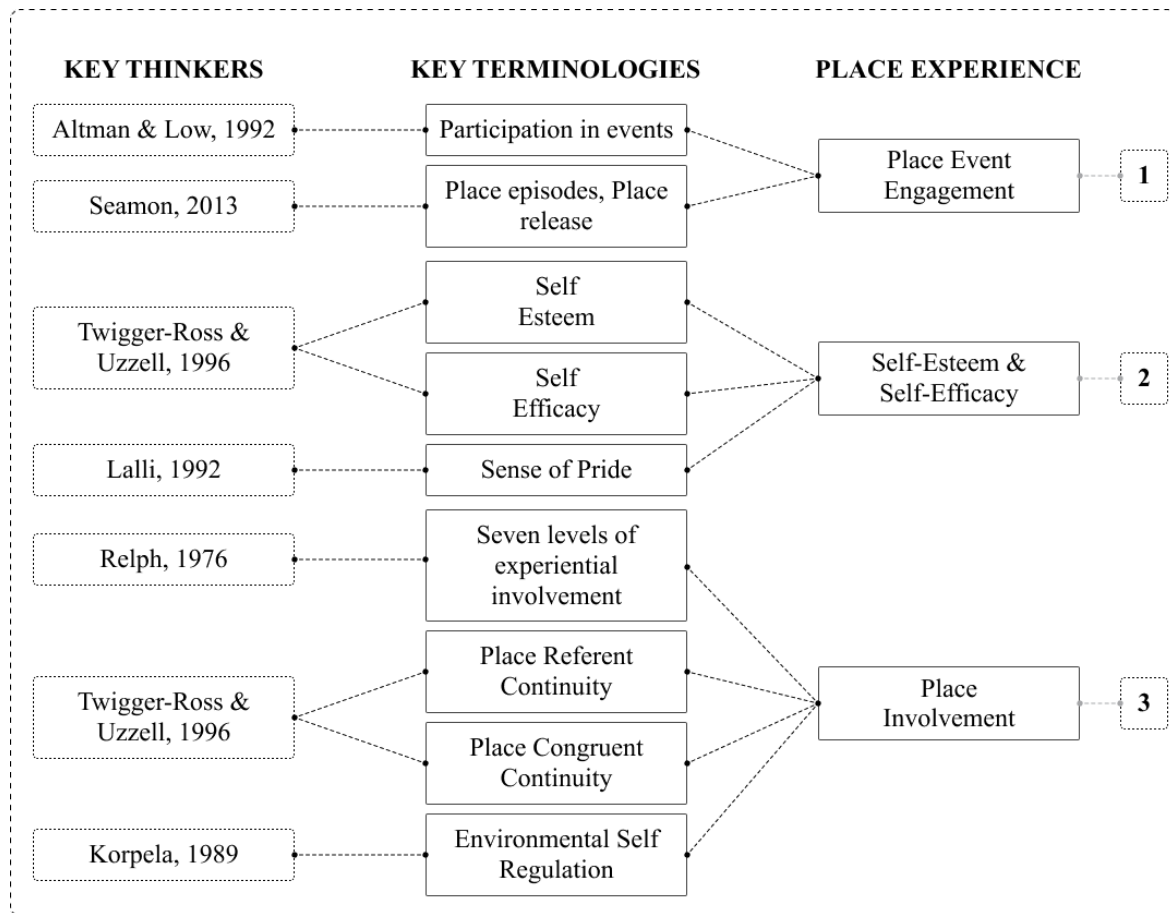


Figure 2.7: Attributes contributing to formation of place experience

2.6 Theoretical Inferences

The theoretical review of literature reveals the various academic stances of various discussions around the concept of 'Place Identity' and its dimensions. A list of attributes which help in shaping Place Identity were deduced by assimilating these various inferences through eliminating overlapping concepts as illustrated in Fig. 2.8. These dimensions of Place Identity provided the base for the conduct of interviews in the case studies to map Place Identity of people.

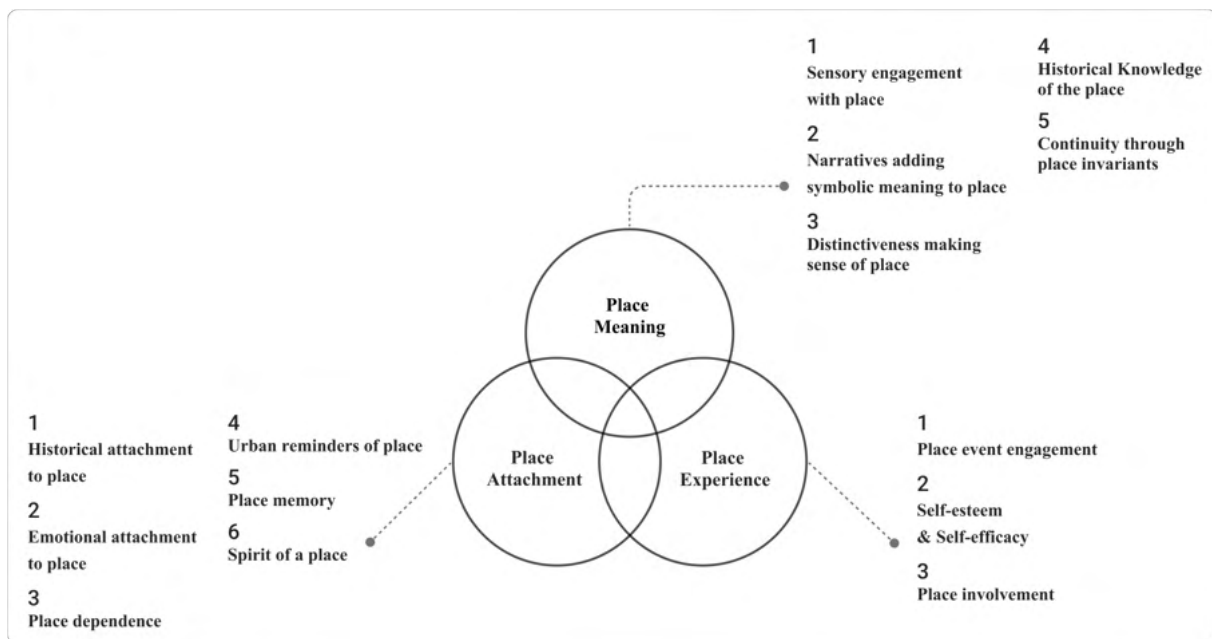


Figure 2.8 : Triadic lens of Place-Identity formation dimensions and attributes (*Source : Derived from Literature review and perception studies*)

2.7 Cultural events

Cultural events are specialised occasions set aside from the everyday routine of life, and many a time with spiritual connotations in Indian cities. They provide a space for various social-cultural interactions to play out and allow people to connect back to their roots (Andrews & Leopold, 2013; Quinn, 2019; Wilmersdörffer & Schlicher, 2019). The temporal nature of events encourages people to break free from their daily routine (Falassi, 1987) and provides opportunities for respite and social interactions. Festivals contribute to a heterogeneous image of a city in this era of globalisation. Urban spaces transform their symbolic global image and merges with the celebratory imagery of age old myths, rituals, culture, history and people. Harcup (2000) argues that festivals support the redefinition, rediscovery and expansion of urban social life and imparts meanings to a place through specific appropriations of urban spaces. Despite the ongoing critical evaluation of festivals as agents for wider political and economic gains, these temporal events provide opportunities for social engagement through experiences in festival spaces and can be key aspects to enrich identity and build social bonds (Stevens & Shin, 2014). In the last few decades, festivals have become a popular instrument to create a sense of distinctiveness and unique identity of cities around the globe. Researchers have determined that festivals not only help a city to preserve its local culture and history, but also enable it to stand out as a tourist destination thus contributing to the urban economy in urban areas (Zukin, 2012). Festivals which are spectacles of a city and part of the intangible heritage are an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in this era of homogenisation of culture (UNESCO, 2011). As cities continue to grow and evolve, cultural heritage is fading in the cacophony of modernisation, resulting in a pluralist identity pervading throughout the entire urban landscape (Das et al., 2017). Festivals are one of the ways through which meaning is imparted to the urban fabric. In India, where festivals are a way of life, these events have heightened importance both in the social and spiritual life of its people. Festivals such as Durga Puja, Diwali, Ganesh Chaturthi, etc. have transpired as the phenomenon of Indian cities and are important in shaping the urban environment and people's idea of a city. Festivals constitute an arena to strengthen local continuity by creating opportunities to draw on “. . . shared histories, shared cultural practices and ideals, as well as creating settings for social interactions. They are arenas where local knowledge is produced and reproduced, where the history, cultural inheritance and social structures that distinguish one place from another, are revised, rejected

or recreated” (Quinn, 2005). Festivals may influence place identity through strengthening the place-belongingness for the people involved in the festivals and for the host community itself.

Various disciplines such as Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology, Environmental Psychology, Social Psychology, Philosophy, Religious Studies, Economics, Management, Political Science, Human Geography have forayed into the study of related parameters associated with events. In literature, studies around cultural events have explored themes such as their social impact (Deery & Jago, 2010; Neuenfeldt, 1995; Quinn & Wilks, 2013), symbolic attributes, scope for experience economy, branding (Gotham, 2005; Hughes, 1999; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Zukin, 1995), social & political dimension (Appadurai, 1996; Boissevain, 2008; Gotham, 2002; Manning, 1983; Waterman, 1998) and influence on place identity (Bird, 2002; BRENNAN-HORLEY et al., 2007; De Bres & Davis, 2010; Derrett, 2003) to mention a few.

For the scope of the research, cultural events consisting of festivals, religious celebrations which are accompanied by rites and rituals have been considered, as they are spatially manifested in the urban fabric, which requires further analysis in the context of identity construction.

2.8 Key Aspects of cultural events

Every cultural event comprises several constituent parts that are ever-recurrent and add to the entire holistic experience of the event. These can be considered as the key aspects of cultural events. Even though precise definition is not possible, cultural events essentially have the following features: Cultural Content, Spatio-temporality, Audience and Stakeholders (Fig. 2.9).

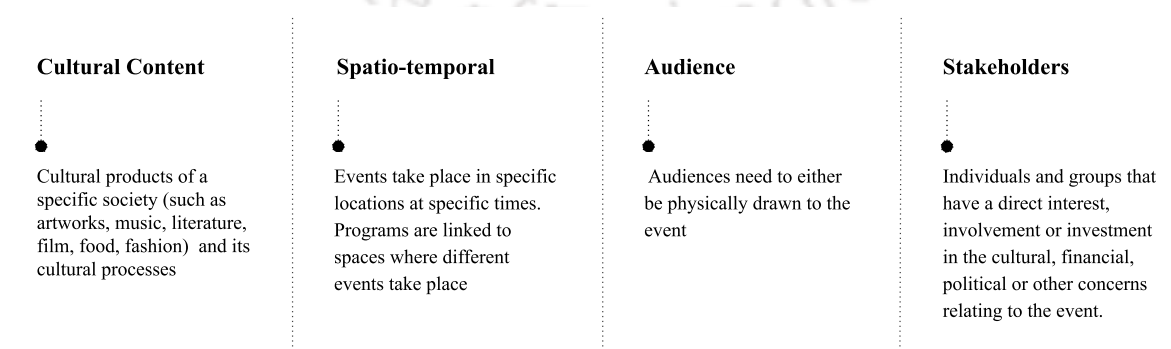


Figure 2.9: Aspects of Cultural Events (Richards & Palmer, 2010a)

2.8.1 Cultural Content

In any cultural event, cultural content is the most essential aspect. 'Culture' in reference to cultural content are the specific products and processes of the communities involved. Every cultural event consists of their own set of rites and rituals that are observed within an exceptional set of time and space. Rites are more formalised ceremonies whereas rituals are repetitive actions that occur at a regular and set time. Van Gennep (1960) in his seminal work on rites and ritual practices talks about the importance of 'transition'. He classifies three types of rites of passage: (i) Rites of transition ; (ii) Rites of separation and (iii) Rites of incorporation. Van Gennep (1960) further distinguished these rituals by stages they pertain to as preliminal, liminal and postliminal. Victor Turner (1969, 1982) linked the concept of 'liminality' with the feeling of 'communitas' experienced in festival events. Turner describes 'communitas' as the experience of participants when they recognise, attach meaning and feelings as a part of a community due to their shared experience during cultural events (E. Turner, 2012; V. Turner, 1969, 1982). Falassi (1987) while discussing the morphology of festivals discussed the various constituent parts, that he terms as 'rites' which form an integral part of any festival. He terms them as Rites of Valorization, Rites of passage, Rites of reversal, Rites of conspicuous display, Rites of conspicuous consumption, Ritual dramas, Rites of exchange, Rites of competition and Rites of devalorization. Many of these rituals and rites have evolved according to the changing needs of society and they no longer adhere only to religious events but also cater to secular events as well. As Boissevain (2008) notes "festivals are being invented, borrowed, reinvented and modified and linked to tradition or history by government, commercial or civic groups promoting their own agendas." The proliferation of emerging festivals in the urban landscape across various Indian cities has been reinventing themselves by borrowing certain old rituals while inventing new ones. In recent times, Chhath Puja celebration in Guwahati has adopted new forms of celebration by borrowing certain rituals from Durga Puja such as elaborate installations in the form of pandals and *visarjan* of the deity Chhathi Maiya, the reigning deity of Chhath Puja.

Rituals reinforce people's bonds as a community and are integral to any cultural events. As the needs of the society changes, these rituals adapt and transform accordingly. Based on the works of key researchers (Andrews & Leopold, 2013; Cudny, 2016; Falassi, 1987; Pine & Gilmore,

1999; Richards & Palmer, 2010a) and considering the Indian context, cultural components of cultural events have been classified into eight categories.

(i) Ceremonial rituals

Every cultural event consists of certain rituals and has been discussed by various researchers (Falassi, 1987; Salamone, 2004; V. Turner, 1982; Van Gennep, 1960). Many of these rituals have a religious significance and serves to revive and express the myths associated with an event, person or place. Since rituals are usually carried out in special, “often sequestered places , the very act of entering the ‘sacred space’ has an impact on the participants” (Schecher, 2003). The performance of rituals strengthens different groups of performative identities in the social structure (Arnaut, 2013). The term ‘rituals’ and related terms such as ‘rites’, ‘ceremony’ have been used interchangeably. Melford Spiro (1971) was one of the first scholars who argued the use of these terms as:

The rite : minimal significant unit of ritual behaviour

A ceremony : is the smallest configuration of rites constituting a meaningful ritual whole, and

Ceremonial : is the total configuration of ceremonies performed during any ritual occasion

Most Indian festive events are ingrained with numerous ceremonial rituals. Michaels (2010) defines the constituent elements of ceremonial rituals as:

- i. Agency (engagement of ritual specialists such as a priest, musicians, etc.);
- ii. Body (festive attire, costumes, ablutions, anointment, unusual movements);
- iii. Language and gestures (reciting holy texts, mantras, blessings, singing);
- iv. Decor (decorated purified arena such as temple, place of sacrifice, sacred sites, flowers, candles, incense sticks, acoustic instruments, etc.);
- v. Framing (setting special times based on horoscope or astral calculations); and
- vi. Material (special food or utensils for offerings, ritual objects and instruments, other offerings).

(ii) Spectacles of conspicuous display

As Falassi (1987) describes, often festive events consist of conspicuous displays of symbolic elements to be touched, adored or worshipped. Bell (1997) terms such conspicuous displays as

‘spectacles of high symbolic nature’ in the public physical settings. Such displays are commonplace during Durga Puja celebrations and Ganesh Chaturthi in the form of massive pandals and idols or the processional rituals South Indian Temple festivals. An interesting way these festivals are increasingly like brands is in their use of themes. These are increasingly used both as organisational and as an artistic device, allowing however a substantial degree of variation and interpretation. They provide a spiritual significance to the city where the static built environment alone would not necessarily have achieved such a heightened cultural significance. Tapati GuhaThakurta (2004), one of the handfuls of scholars invested in the study of the visual culture of Durga Puja notes, that festivals “serves as a powerful mirror of the changing sociology of the neighbourhoods and of the collective public life in today's Calcutta...with each passing Durga Puja, transformations get more spectacular, the simulations more novel, the concepts often more and more outrageous. As has long been lamented the tableaux, lights and decorations seem to have taken over the festival, pushing its religious or ritual dimensions to a second place”. Such conspicuous displays impart visual identities to cultural events that transform as such displays adapt to the changing times.

(iii) Reenactment of narratives

The reenactment of narratives usually happens at the site of the festival through retelling of myths, legends and other forms of narratives. Through the reenactment of such narratives, the members of the community are reminded of their past and thus continuity is maintained from one generation to the next. Such reenactment of narratives are sometimes staged directly and on other times, they are hinted or referred to in some segments or events of the festival (Coffin & Cohen, 1966). One such form of reenactment is celebrated in the river island of Majuli in Assam, known as ‘Raasleela’ which is an annual festival performed on the full moon day (Purnima) in the month of October-November (Kati-Aghun) during the autumn season. Raasleela is the narrative of the life of Lord Krishna, reenacted through performance involving various traditional musical instruments, masks, dance and other cultural artefacts. Reena Tiwari (2010) discusses the lived experience of ‘Ramlila’ celebrated in Varanasi. She explores the relationship between body and space where space is the everyday urban space which provides appropriate context for the performance which she describes as “Transgression into a liminal state involves a temporary loss of self. The psychic energy flows out and includes the object of perception and there is merging of the self and the other It is here that the lived space is

constructed, and becomes a monument of memory” (Tiwari, 2010). Thus, such temporary spaces through reenactment of narratives adds to place memory of the lived space.

(iv) Cultural performances

Cultural performances aid in the experience of a cultural event. Schechner (2003) observes that such cultural performances are not just limited to entertaining the audience but also encourage community engagement, are educational, exhibit restorative effect by providing a respite from the mundane life of everyday, creates an identity of the place and people. *Bihu* dance is one such folkdance which is performed during the festival of *Bohag Bihu* in Assam. Such performances reinforce the identity of the people, culture and place. Different cultural events usually consists of three main constituents which are the observer, the performer and the setting for the performance. During cultural performance, most often the performers are transformed to a heightened state which involves transition in the state of mind and emotions sensed by the performers (Tiwari, 2010). Such performances, through their multisensory experience of music, instruments, drama, crowd cheering makes the audience/observer an integral part of the performance (Bell, 1997). A feeling of ‘communitas’ is evoked through the exaggerated gestures, expressions and attires of the performances (Tiwari, 2010; E. Turner, 2012; V. Turner, 1969, 1982). Bell (1997) in his performance theory has discussed the concepts of kinesthesia (dramatic movements of the performer) and synesthesia (collective sensory experience by the observer). Besides the performance, metaphors, symbols and the settings also play a key role in captivating the audience and strengthening place meaning (Richards & Palmer, 2010a). The city is prepared as a setting for such performances for the audience and the performers to create memorable experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Cultural performances as a key cultural component, through their memorable experiences which are magnified by groups into a shared sense of community, enhancing the identity of the place and the collective identity.

(v) Conspicuous consumption

Conspicuous consumption usually involves food and drinks in the form of various feasts, banquets or symposia (Falassi, 1987). In sociology and in economics, conspicuous consumption describes the consumerist behaviour of purchase and the term was first coined by economist, Thorstein Veblen (Veblen, 1899). During festive events in India, the marketplaces

are flooded with variety of consumer products which leads to 'conspicuous consumption' of these products usually for gifting purposes along with other experiential objects such as food and performances. With the emergence of 'experiential purchase' (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), there is an increase in the purchase of intangible products that are mainly concerned with experiences. With the advent of social media such as facebook and instagram, people want to exude their personality more than their status and wealth (Woodward, 2002). People have the luxury of exhibiting their intangible consumption which is leading towards the commodification of culture.

(vi) Competitive spirit

Cultural events carry with them the spirit of competition as communities are provided with an opportunity to showcase their talent and presence. Armed with a competitive spirit, communities derive satisfaction and pleasure in representing their group. Tapati Guha Thakurta (2004) discusses about the competitive spirit during Durga Puja celebrations in Kolkata. New social dynamics are created as a result of such endeavours during the pandal creation in Durga Puja celebrations in Kolkata. There are sometimes conflict of interest between the traditional artisans and the art school trained artists who have also forayed into pandal making. This results in mass hysteria over accolades and awards, media coverage for well-crafted pandals and idols, thus contributing to the present character of spectacle of the festival. During Magh Bihu celebrations in various parts of Assam, people indulge in various games and recreations such as egg-fighting, buffalo fighting, bird-fighting, etc. which bends culture and the spirit of games, and reflect a sense of belongingness.

(vii) The spirit of offerings

The festive fervour of cultural events are often accompanied by offerings, sacrifices and gifting (Baal, 1976). Such acts of sacrifice and offerings are an integral part of cultural events of most religions. There are many narratives around the act of offering which highlights virtues of good deeds, making such charitable acts very crucial aspect of cultural events. For instance, during Ambubachi Mela in Guwahati (Fig. 2.10), many people offer food on a large scale as 'dana' to the devotees who come to participate in the festival. Another such unique example is the famous 'Langar', a form of community kitchen in Gurudwaras. The act of offering gifts is

considered as a form of social obligation during cultural events and many a times embedded with symbolic meanings (Sherry, 1983).

(viii) Commercial activities

Cultural events provide opportunities for a variety of commercial activities. Most Indian cultural events have rituals that accommodates and necessitates such commercial activities. For instance, fairs or melas are essential elements of many festivals in India. These melas usually have at their core ritual activities associated with a particular festival and are celebrated in specific grounds which often has a rich history associated with narratives of the festival. Melas might be celebrated for a variety of reasons, but their main purpose is often to evoke and integrate three goals of action (dharma, artha and kama) which are at once religious, commercial and pleasurable events (Kurin, 1985). Despite their religious purpose, melas have a temporary bazaar or market, food stalls, and performance areas and are often oriented towards trade and commerce. From manufactured city goods to handcrafted goods, melas provide economic sustenance to the community.



Figure 2.10: Food camps serving food to devotees during Ambubachi Mela, 2017 illustrating the spirit of offerings (Source: Author)

2.8.2 Spatio-temporality aspect of cultural event spaces

The performance of any cultural event requires a platform for the construction of collective memory and social experiences within a spatio-temporal framework (Halbwachs, 1992). The urban fabric is often temporarily transformed to accommodate the celebration of such events. This temporary transformation gives a sense of identity to the space and also creates a sense of belongingness. Social activities, otherwise incomprehensible in such a spatial setting are permitted during cultural events. Festive events in Indian context are specifically linked to the celebration of time (Eck, 2012; Goodfriend, 1979). Since ancient times, festivals have marked the transition of time following a traditional cyclical system of occurrence (Goodfriend, 1979; Thapar, 2005). Their recurrence depended on either the passage of seasons, harvest rotation, astronomical calculations based on cyclical movement of moon and other stellar movements. During the festival celebrations, the everyday routine comes to a halt as people experience a time out of time. Most of these events have their own time frame marking the commencement and the culmination of their various rites and rituals. Van Gennep (1960) addresses the dimension of time during festivals through the division of rituals into three stages- the 'preliminal', 'liminal' and 'post liminal' where the ritual time occurs during the 'liminal' stage. As these events are recurring, within a limited duration, collective in nature and celebrated in the public environment, they aid in reinforcing the collective consciousness of the people and the place. Festivals thus create a localised time and temporalised space, with a sense of spatio-temporal permeability attached to them (Quentin & HaeRan, 2014). The sense of festive fervour have a lingering affect prior to and continues during and after the celebrations are over. In a similar manner, there is a spatial spillover to the adjoining spaces that enriches the event experience.

2.8.3 Audience

Pine & Gilmore (1999) coined the 'experience economy' where the trend is focussed on 'experience society' and 'experiential purchase'. Events provide the ground for the unfolding of shared experiences making such experiences memorable and a feeling of *communitas*, which an integral aspect of individual and group identity (E. Turner, 2012; V. Turner, 1969). The entire experience of an event rests profoundly on the quality of interaction between the performer and the audience. The success of a performance is thus partly dependent on this communication process that takes place during cultural events. There could be various degrees

of involvement of the audience in any cultural event. An individual could be a bystander or a mere spectator and watch from the sidelines or they could be completely involved with the entire gamut of proceedings during any cultural event. In the latter case, there is hardly any distinction between the audience and the performer. In religious events like the *visarjan* of Ganesh idols during Ganesh Chaturthi, the sound of drums, amidst the chants of ‘Ganpati Bappa Morya’, cheer of the people participating in the event, create a memorable shared experience. The spectators thus form an integral part of any cultural event and has the ability to influence the experience of the event.

2.8.4 Stakeholders

Apart from the audience and performers, cultural events have a wide range of stakeholders who may be individuals or groups having direct interest, involvement or investment in the cultural, financial, political or other concerns pertaining to any cultural event (Getz, 1991). They are either directly or indirectly affected or can affect the events, thus contributing significantly to the transaction of any event.

2.9 Space and Cultural events inter-relationship

The spaces for cultural events are arenas wherein the performance of various events culminate, bringing together people to have a shared experience, thus establishing a relationship with the space and making it meaningful. These events are temporal in nature, recurring in public spaces and creating collective narrative in the consciousness of the place and the participants. These spaces wherein the manifestation of cultural expressions occur, impart a distinctive identity to the temporal spaces. By bringing together the tangible and the intangible elements together, these temporal cultural event spaces create a sense of place and belonging, imparting a unique identity to the city and its inhabitants. This section elaborates on the concept of events, their role in society and their spatial manifestations in urban environments. An analysis of the various typology of Indian festivals along with reasons for selection of the festivals under study will also be explained in detail.

2.9.1 Socio-Spatiality of Cultural Events

Patrick Geddes during his work in India, understood that Indian cities with their various

cultural events are spatially intertwined with the city fabric which is more evident in the ancient Indian festive cities (Goodfriend, 1979; Welter, 2003). Through the social use of the built fabric, conveying meaning to the physical environment, thus 'producing social spaces' (Lefebvre, 1991), cultural events reinforce a 'metaphysical idea' (Welter, 2003). Festivals are celebrated in existing urban spaces which are part of the formal built structure of the city. Some of the spaces may be used temporarily as sites for these festivals where elaborate rituals as a part of such celebrations are carried out in the streets or other public places (V. Turner, 1987). Thus, in this temporal reconstructed space, people experience a different time and place (Tiwari, 2010). By bringing people and activities within these temporal ritualised spaces, festivals in urban areas can lead to heightened sensory and emotional experiences not only with the place but also with themselves and their fellow participants. Thus by assigning connotative meanings, they collectively construct and create a 'lived space' (Lefebvre, 1991) - a mental space of their lived experiences.

Cultural events are celebrated in diverse environmental settings wherein the spatial aspects aid in the interweaving of activities and people, thus establishing a relationship amongst them. This relationship between events and their spatial settings, their manifestation, transformation, various meanings attached and attained and the spatial characteristics which enhance the festive experience has been the subject of interest of many researchers (Certeau, 1998; Lefebvre, 1991; Tiwari, 2010; V. Turner, 1982, 1987). Festive events create a meaningful association with a space through their ritualised performances and is one of the major reasons for formation of identity. In recent years, studies have focussed on how places are socially constructed through human interaction (Bird, 2002). Festivals as arenas for such interaction, can be hypothesised that they contribute to identity construction through their narratives, and by imparting and endowing meaning to such places of celebration (Karlsen, 2007, p. 186).

The transformation from everyday urbanism to festive urbanism is explored further by elaborating on the various processes which affect event-space relationship as derived from literature. An analysis was done to understand how these processes help in the formation of social space as defined by Lefebvre's spatial triad as the 'spatial practices or perceived space', 'representation of space or the conceived space' and 'representational space or the lived space' in the realm of festivals.

2.9.2 Festivals in everyday urban spaces

Indian cities have two components that define their changing urban scenario. They can be categorised as the Static City and the Kinetic City as Rahul Mehrotra mentions in his essay (Mehrotra, 2004). The Static City confirms with the traditional notions of looking at a city whereas the Kinetic City like the unruly child is dynamic, organic and often temporary in nature. Temporal and innovative are the keywords that define the Kinetic city. Festive spaces belong to this dimension of a city. They are temporal, dynamic and stretch the formally unimagined use of space in urban cities. The everyday urbanism in Indian cities is this co-existence of this formal and informal which imparts varied meanings to the urban environment against which festival urbanism is performed. Even though festival urbanism is a temporary departure from the everyday routine of a place, they both share the same spatial setting. Festivals provide opportunities for interactions between the built fabric and the narrative laden spaces of the event. The experience of any event is dependent on this conversation between the event and their spatial setting. Thus, any changes to the spatial setting by only considering the everyday needs of the place, will eventually impact the meaning attributed to the cultural events celebrated in that space. Thus, utmost importance should be given to maintain this balance between the everyday needs and the festive needs of a place.

Festivals, despite their temporality embody far more than just entertainment and are contributing to the identity, liveability and economics of cities (Frenchman, 2004). By comparing several event places in the North American context, Frenchman (2004) derives certain patterns due to the interweaving of form and activity in event-spaces. He discusses seven lessons on the ways an event forms a relationship with its place of manifestation; which he terms as

- i) Territory
- ii) Intimacy
- iii) Granularity
- iv) Triangulation
- v) Movement
- vi) Scale &
- vii) Sensuality

However, in the context of Indian festivals, two more characteristic features were added which were ‘Embeddedness’ and ‘Narrative/Memory’. Most of the festivals in India are deeply connected to age old myths, legends and heritage, through which the spatial context of such event-places become agents of shared collective memory. Thus, these two aspects become an integral aspect of event-space relationship in the context of Indian festivals.

The spatial triad proposed by Henri Lefebvre (1991) was used as a theoretical framework in order to gain a holistic understanding of the ways these nine processes enhance festival experience. It consists of the perceived, conceived and lived realms of space, which Lefebvre connotes respectively as ‘spatial practices’, ‘representation of space’ and ‘representational space’.

‘Spatial practices’ refer to the facts of the space, which is the inherent natural setting and characters of the place and then associated with certain activity or event. Most Indian cities have a traditional organic core layered with myths, narratives and history which form the basis for ‘spatial practices’ of rituals and festive events. Many festivals spatially exist and are deeply embedded in the built fabric due to these narratives around the space of celebration. These narratives, myths around the place add multifaceted meaning to the festival spaces and reinforce the existence of such spaces. Thus, eventually, over time, a set of ‘spatial practices’ evolve based on the perceived aspects of such places.

‘Representation of space’ is the conceived space or the abstract space. This is the mental space as conceived by planners and such professionals. It is a dominant representation which may be in the form of, for example city-wide zoning plans and strategy documents, or formalised visual representations of various kinds such as maps, master plans and design guides.

The ‘representational space’ or lived space concerns how human beings use the space and, most importantly, mould the space for their own use in an indigenous manner. This space is the lived realm where activities of people over time imparts meaning to that place. During cultural events, a unique image is imparted to the city due to the specialised representation of the space. Spaces and elements in the city transform temporarily to accommodate the performance of cultural events and create a permanence through memories among the participants.

By analysing the nine processes of event-space relationship through the lens of ‘Spatial triad’ as proposed by Lefebvre (Fig. 2.11), it was observed that they were interdependent on one another as one influenced the other, thereby enhancing the festive experience. These nine processes are further explained in the following section by drawing upon their relationship with the spatial triad by Henri Lefebvre (1991).

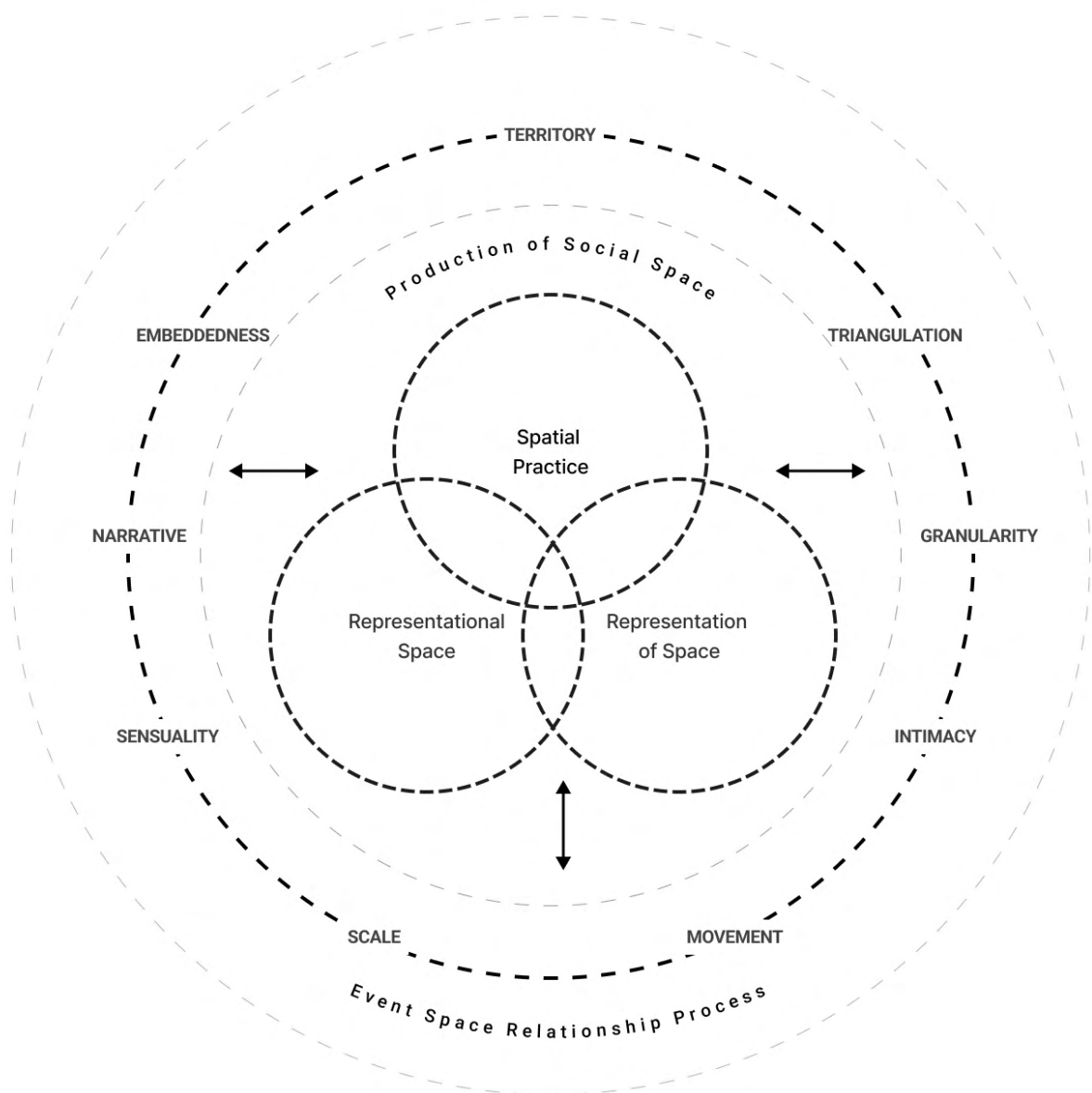


Figure 2.11: Role of event-place relationship in the production of social space
(Source : Derived by analysing the nine processes of event-space relationship through the lens of ‘Spatial triad’)

2.10 Event-space relationship process

2.10.1 Embeddedness

In Indian cities, cultural events are celebrated to commemorate any mythical, historical or legendary occurrence. These events are usually carried out in the same spatial context as the place of occurrence of such events. During festive performances, the characteristic of the place is signified through the manifestation of the event and the embedded spatial connect of the event to the place is visualised through such events. Festivals may thus influence place identity by strengthening the feeling of place-belongingness, creating awareness amongst the participants and the audience and enhancing their self-esteem. The ‘embeddedness’ of the events could be understood through Lefebvre’s (1991) spatial triad theory as the facts of the place or ‘spatial practices’. The site of celebration embedded in narratives, myths surrounding the spatial configuration has many meanings attached to it. These ‘spatial practices’ guide the ‘representation of space’ and form the ‘representational spaces’ in Indian cities (Fig. 2.11).

2.10.2 Territory

Cultural events are celebrated in the existing physical settings in the city. However, every event has their spatial boundary that demarcates such event-spaces from the everyday urban fabric. As Frenchman (2004) observes, “The ability to create this sense of separation is closely related to location within the physical fabric of a community. Good territories have defined edges, and can be separated in space or time from the common terrain.” Such spatial limits usually has edges formed by streets and neighbourhoods. During Durga Puja celebrations, brightly lit pandals and the surrounding areas are illuminated that manifests as a separate entity during such celebrations. The sound of drums, lights, decorations, the colours, the music, street vendors, and the people in festive mood come together to create this festive arena. The built fabric becomes the palimpsest on which such festive activities are inscribed.

The distinct edges, and the spatial transformation transfers people to a different world of festivities which detaches them from the everydayness of the place. The perception of place is enhanced by the defined territory of event spaces during the festive period in the everyday urban spaces. The physical manifestation of the event spaces defining the territory is what Lefebvre (1991) terms as ‘spatial practices’ which is one of the aspects of the event-space relationship process. The festival identity of the place becomes more pronounced when the

formation of territory during any event becomes more intense through decorations, lighting, signages, etc. which add to the ‘representation of space’ of the territory. The behaviour of the festivalgoers through their informal activities, enhancing the festive spirit of the territory is a form of ‘representational space’. Thus, through the contribution of the three elements of the spatial triad (Lefebvre, 1991), sense of territory is formed during cultural events.

2.10.3 Intimacy

Event-places create emotional and social bonds between the event and the participants involved by facilitating intimacy as people and activity are compressed together (Frenchman, 2004). Sharing past experiences of the event or partaking in the various activities offered by the event, the bond between people strengthens. Such event spaces allow ‘sharing the stage’ as Frenchman (2004) notes, allowing both the performers and the audience to occupy the same physical space. Acts such as taking a dip in the river with fellow co-participants during Chhath Puja (Fig. 2.12) or offering prayers to the Sun God thereafter, reinforces the feeling of *communitas* which is an important underpinning of individual and group identity. This moment shared with strangers weaves people an invisible bond of festive fervour. Such acts encourage courteous behaviour as people become more willing to help and more ready to trust their fellow participants. This is the lived reality of the place during festive events or the ‘representational space’ as Lefebvre (1991) refers to in his spatial triad. Such representational spaces add significance to the place through intimacy which helps in the production of the social space.



Figure 2.12: Devotees performing morning *Usha arghya* during Chhath Puja, Guwahati
(Image source: Author)

2.10.4 Granularity

Frenchman (2004) notes the importance of Granularity of any event-places as “Good event-places accommodate multiple nodes of activity and groups. Events are not monolithic; and one should be able to experience them at many levels.” By offering various potentials for interaction both within the event space and throughout the event, a particular event could be experienced in a variety of forms. This enhances the festive experience as people are offered a spectrum of choices which allows them to elongate their experience of the various facets of the event. Granularity offers people the flexibility to assume any role they desire while experiencing the event. They can either be an observer or a performer, or just be a bystander, which allows more people to participate in any capacity they desire (Fig. 2.13). Such manifold experiences of the event leaves lasting visual imagery in the minds of the participants.



Figure 2.13: People dressed up in costumes representing Hindu Gods during Ambubachi Mela, Guwahati (Image source: Author)

During the Ambubachi Mela in Guwahati, people can experience the event-place as a series of experiences. These are spaces which allow people to be spectators or engage with the events and the performers. The presence of a variety of activities such as stalls offering food and

water, vendors selling trinkets or people dressed to reenact the narratives around the mela, add to the variety of experience one can indulge in, thus making the event granular.

The aspect of granularity is most often a sought after attribute that planners, developers and visionaries who envision how a place can be made more engaging. Such ‘representation of space’ (Lefebvre, 1991) adds to the people-place bonds and the production of social space (as shown in (Fig. 2.11). While experiencing an event, people devise their own ways of being involved with the event, thus adding to the granularity attribute of the event. This is the lived space or the ‘representational space’ (Lefebvre, 1991) and over time such behaviours set the precedent for experiencing certain aspects of events. The spatiality of event spaces further accentuates granularity by offering various vantage points, ease of access to certain activities, and so forth are examples of spatial qualities which influence the spatial practices that attribute the aspect of granularity to an event. Thus, the three elements of the spatial triad come together to impart granular experience during any cultural event.

2.10.5 Triangulation

The term ‘triangulation’ was first coined by William H. Whyte (1980) when he observed that an external stimulus fostered interaction and a sense of community between two strangers, as though they were not. This phenomenon is a frequent occurrence in Indian festive events where the presence of a third element prompts people to bond over the proceedings of the event. Such elements could be the music, or the idol, or any other such elements which could be visualised through performances that enthralls the audience. Such immersive experience brings strangers together to form a cohesive community and forms the lived realm of the festive space.

The festive spaces are designed in a manner that would allow maximum people to engage in the event. Such ‘representation of space’ takes into consideration the spatial practices of the place. Finally, the lived experience of the place through informal appropriations of the various spatial elements contribute to the spirit and essence of the festival by enabling ‘triangulation’ to occur. Thus, as depicted in Figure 2.11, all the three elements of the spatial triad help in the process of ‘triangulation’ which enhances the entire experience of any festive event.



Figure 2.14: Thrissur Pooram, Thrissur

(Source:<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/thrissur-keeps-its-date-with-pooram-after-2-years/article65401871.ece>)

Thrissur Pooram (Fig. 2.14) celebrated in the Thekkinkadu Maidan, marks the procession of deities from the 10 participating temples to the premises of Sree Vadakkunnathan Temple to the accompaniment of music and prayer. People gather to observe the grand displays of beautifully decorated elephants, several fireworks, percussion music and decorated parasols. This festival witnesses 250 artists playing the special instrument called chenda simultaneously, which anchors the attention of the people as they witness the ongoing festivities. The music, prayers and decorated elephants also help in the triangulation process.

2.10.6 Movement

Event places which are dynamic facilitate movement and promote participation are considered to be more engaging in nature. People can move along the various vantage points in any event which provides a more holistic experience of the event. In processional rituals as observed in the yearly Karaga festival in Bengaluru (Fig. 2.15), movement involves a series of diverse experiences. The festival starts with the ritual of hoisting of the flag at the Dharmaraja Temple to signify the start of the festival. This is followed by various rituals and ceremonies spread across the length of the festival. The final performance of the festival involves the priest

carrying the Karaga deity from the Dharmaraja Temple through the pettah, various sites of importance, temples, extinct water bodies and historic gates demarcated in the city surrounded by festivities and thousands of people. The dynamic nature can be attributed to the facts of the space and thus can be observed as the ‘spatial practices’ during the performance of the event, adding to the experiential aspect of the event and enhancing memory. The movement of the procession through the historic pettah and now extinct tanks, is planned to commemorate the various sites of historical importance that have framed the urban form of the historic city or Pettah. This ‘representation of space’ thus connects various areas during the performance of the events adding meaning and value to the event and the connected places. The informal activities accompanying the festival take place in the spaces adjoining the main event space, imparting a ‘representational character’ and encouraging movement of people. Thus, the three aspects of spatial triad play an integral role in enhancing the festive experience.



Figure 2.15: Karaga Festival, Bengaluru

(Source:<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/bangalore/bengaluru-300-yr-old-karaga-festival-begins-at-dharmaraya-temple-7861731/>)

2.10.7 Scale

A balance between the event and place is required for positive experience of the event. “ When events get too large for their place, intimacy, granularity and triangulation can be lost” (Frenchman, 2004). Improper enclosures, inaccessible views, or in some instances when the

attendance grows manifold than the spatial setting could accommodate, the experience of the event could be impacted negatively. Thus, the proportion of event is of the utmost importance to experience events.

The Kumbh Mela is one such festival which is celebrated on a mega scale. Comparing it to a complex mega city, Felipe Vera and Rahul Mehrotra discuss the ‘reversibility’ and ‘openness’ as key aspects of the festival. The extensive planning involves various stakeholders, administrators, which makes the erection and dismantling of this ‘ephemeral city’ possible within a span of five months (Fig. 2.16). Thus, the attribute of scale plays an integral role in the ‘representation of space’ (Lefebvre, 1991) of the spatial triad and the production of socio-cultural space.



Figure 2.16: Kumbh Mela, Allahabad

(Source:<https://worksthatwork.com/4/constructing-the-worlds-biggest-disassemblable-city>)

2.10.8 Sensuality

Cultural event spaces are essentially sensual and a melting pot of various sensory stimulations.

“They artfully engage all of the senses: the feel of movement through space, warmth, or cold; the sound of music reverberating off a wall; the smell of burning wood; the taste of food; the sight of costumes and color, blended by the imagination into an unusual experience. (Frenchman, 2004)”. The transition from the ordinary to the festive mode is primarily sensed through the senses as one enters the festival arena. Such sensations are magnified when shared collectively into a sense of community. These festive spaces are layered with the emotional resonance of the participants which can transform the perception of the place. Many of these event spaces are conceived by the event planners as ‘Representation of space’ to enhance the experience of the event. The lived reality of the space also contributes to the sensuality of the festive event. Indian festivals are rich in such festive immersion.



Figure 2.17: Dhunuchi Naach, Kolkata

(Source:<https://tribune.com/a-visual-tribute-to-bengals-biggest-festival-durga-puja>)

For instance, the *Dhunuchi Naach* during Durga Puja (Fig. 2.17) is performed by holding the *Dhunuchi*, an earthen pot filled with burning coconut husk, camphor, and *dhuno* that generate thick smoke, to the beats of the *Dhak*. The energetic beat of the drums, combined with the smell of *dhuno* and the vivid colours of the puja pandal, create a sensual experience for the spectators. Thus, the ‘Spatial Practices’ in Indian festivals is a resultant of the ‘Representation

of Space’ and the ‘Representational Spaces’ as indicated in Figure. 2.11.

2.10.9 Narrative

Narratives in the form of various myths, legends poetry, text, paintings, inscriptions, etc., are a form of ‘representations of space’ as they root a event to their spatial setting. During cultural events, reenactment of the various narratives reinstates the connection of the event to their spatial setting. Such narratives add layers of meaning to the various elements otherwise ordinary everyday built fabric. Through retelling of stories, shared heritage, culture and experience of the event, narratives enhance the collective consciousness of the people. Thus, they add additional meaning to the event and become agents of collective memory. “Narrative event spaces can bridge space and time (Frenchman, 2004)”. Events are ephemeral, and people constantly invent ways to manifest their interpretation of the narratives to the lived realm of the festive events. The ‘representational space’ thus evolved through the conception of newer ideas adds to the experience of the event. Places, unlike the temporal events, retain the evidence of the event when it’s over. Thus, the ‘Spatial Practice’ grounds the ‘Representations of Space’ and the ‘Representational Space’ to the spatial context. The narratives enhance the experience of a festival by contributing to the production of the social spaces based on the spatial triad (Fig. 2.11).

2.11 Inferences

Through the theoretical and analytical understanding of the various aspects of cultural event space relationship, it could be inferred that the nine spatio-temporal characteristics of festival urbanism provided a better conception, perception and experience of the event. Further on in the research, these aspects were analysed in the context of the event spaces of the selected cases for this research. As observed in the discussions under each process, the ‘Representations of Space’ impacts the ‘Spatial practices’ which in turn affects the lived realm during the production of socio-cultural space. The ‘Representations of Space’ which falls under the purview of the decision makers of a place, needs to be effectively factored as a critical component to realise its potential to create new relationships and adding meaning to place, thus reinforcing its identity.

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS

This chapter outlines the overall methodological explorations adopted for the conduct of the case studies after the formulation of the conceptual framework. It details out the specific methods of inquiry to be used for gathering data from the case studies, analysis of the data collected to highlight the role played by event spaces in reinforcing Place-Identity. This chapter elaborates on the design of the detailed methodology, explaining the specific methods and tools adopted while specifying their appropriateness for the research.



3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theoretical and philosophical assumptions supporting this research and the research design adopted based on them. It acts as a link between the conceptual and contextual queries adopted for this research. An overview of the assumptions and expected outcomes of the research questions formulated for this research is laid out along with the objectives. This chapter further elaborates on the positioning of this research in the larger philosophical domain. A methodological approach toward the selection of cases for study and the selection of tools for documentation of festival spaces are explained in detail. Further sections in this chapter detail the tools and methods for documenting Place-Identity. Spatial analysis of cases under study to uncover the various spatial aspects of event spaces that facilitate identity construction in multicultural urban environments is illustrated. This chapter thus, explains the research methodology, including the strategies and methods of data collection and analysis. This chapter further elaborates in detail the interdisciplinary framework of analysis developed as part of the methodology of this research.

3.2 Deliverables of the methodological explorations

The research utilised multiple methodologies in order to capture the unique intricacies of the festivals under study. Data was collected through interviews, participant observations, visual ethnography and morphological studies. This chapter will highlight each of these methodological explorations sequentially and explain in detail their role in addressing the identified research questions.

The research questions (as discussed in Chapter 1) were formulated to guide the course of the research in a systematic manner. There were five research questions that aimed at understanding the morphology of multicultural festival urban spaces in Guwahati in the context of socio-spatiality (visually and spatially) and analysing the relationship between multicultural festival urban spaces and place identity through the interpretation of socio-spatiality. Fig. 3.1 gives an overview of the methodological approaches adopted in this research.

The first research question (Table 3.1) aimed at understanding the association of festival spaces with the characteristics of everyday urbanism. This will set the research's premise by

establishing the study's context. Literature review was adopted extensively apart from personal observation, interactions with festival attendees and local residents and other stakeholders.

RESEARCH QUESTION - 1	What is the significance of cultural events in present day urbanism			
OBJECTIVE	To understand the significance of cultural events in the present context of urbanism in India.			
TOOLS	Literature	Personal Observation	Interaction with festival attendees and local residents	Discussion with various stakeholders
OUTCOME	Narrative on the significance of cultural events spaces in urban environments			

Table 3.1 : Research Question 1

The second research question (Table 3.2) puts emphasis on the relationship between the spatial configuration of festival event-spaces and the activities that are performed therein. The morphology of festivals celebrated in Guwahati was analysed through secondary sources and discussions with residents and festival attendees to establish a taxonomy of festival spaces in accordance with their manifestation in urban environments. Thus, based on the typology and classification of festivals, three festival types were selected for the study. The influence of the spatial configuration of urban environments in elevating the festive experience was analysed to understand how multicultural festival spaces have evolved in an urban ambience and what aspects accentuate the festival experience. Another objective was to understand and analyse how urban spaces transform with time and context and their implication on spatial identity. A set of nine spatial aspects derived from literature review highlights the relationship between events and spaces. The cases under study largely focus on the implicit meanings and experiences of people and their role in the formation of identity. Thus, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method was considered as the most appropriate as it explores and understands the lived experiences of a specified phenomenon, such as festival urbanism. Focussing on the experiential aspect of IPA, this method will be highly beneficial to

the research owing to the context based and dependency on social, historical and cultural perspectives in identity construction.

RESEARCH QUESTION - 2	How do cultural events perform in everyday urban spaces?			
OBJECTIVE	To understand how the spatial aspects of everyday urban spaces accommodate and accentuate the performance of cultural events			
TOOLS	Secondary sources	Interaction with festival attendees and local residents	Literature	Phenomenological methods
OUTCOME	Spatial characteristics of urban environments contributing to enhancing festival experience			

Table 3.2 : Research Question 2

The third research question (Table 3.3) focussed largely on underpinning the various factors influencing identity construction in multicultural urban environments. A three set of objectives were framed to decipher the various theoretical constructs of identity, spatially map human perception of place-identity and to analyse patterns of identity construction in the context of festivals. The first objective was to attempt to deconstruct place-identity concepts through literature pertaining to dimension of meaning, experience and place engagement. The result was a list of factors influencing the construct of place-identity. The second objective was to objectively document resident's perception of Place-Identity through the theoretical constructs of Place Identity. Through this process, the effect of urban and cultural elements on people's perception of spatial identity was spatially mapped.

RESEARCH QUESTION - 3	What are the various theoretical constructs influencing place-identity construction in multicultural urban environments?	
OBJECTIVE	To decipher the various theoretical constructs of identity for required	To objectively document resident's perception of Place-

	depth of understanding of the dimensions of meaning, experience and place engagement	Identity through the theoretical constructs of Place Identity
TOOLS	Literature study	Case study method Mapping
OUTCOME	Factors influencing construct of spatial-identity	Patterns of identity formation through socio-spatial analysis

Table 3.3 : Research Question 3

The fourth research (Table 3.4) question specifically investigates the role of festivals in the construction of spatial-identity in contemporary multicultural urban environments. The objectives were to compare the perception around the notion of place-identity of the participants and the spatiality of the event-spaces and identify the spatial attributes contributing to the enhancement of spatial-identity construction. The process of spatial mapping of the cases under study as mentioned above along with the morphological analysis techniques, visual analysis, socio-cultural, temporal and perceptual analysis aided in the formulation of aspects contributing to spatial-identity formation.

RESEARCH QUESTION - 4	What is the role of cultural events in the construction of an individual's place identity?	
OBJECTIVE	To compare the perception of place-identity of the attendees with the spatiality of festivals	To identify the spatial attributes contributing to the enhancement and construction of place-identity
TOOLS	Case study method Mapping	Spatial analysis (Morphological Analysis Techniques, visual analysis, socio-cultural, temporal and perceptual analysis)
OUTCOME	Hypothesis assessment	Spatial aspects contributing to place-identity formation

Table 3.4 : Research Question 4

The final research (Table 3.5) question explored in situating cultural event spaces in the development and planning process through a strategic framework of analysis specifically for contemporary multicultural urban environments.

RESEARCH QUESTION - 5	How can multicultural festival spaces be considered in the development and planning process?
OBJECTIVE	To establish assessment frameworks for intervening in multicultural urban environments
TOOLS	Case study method
OUTCOME	Strategic framework for Place Identity

Table 3.5 : Research Question 5

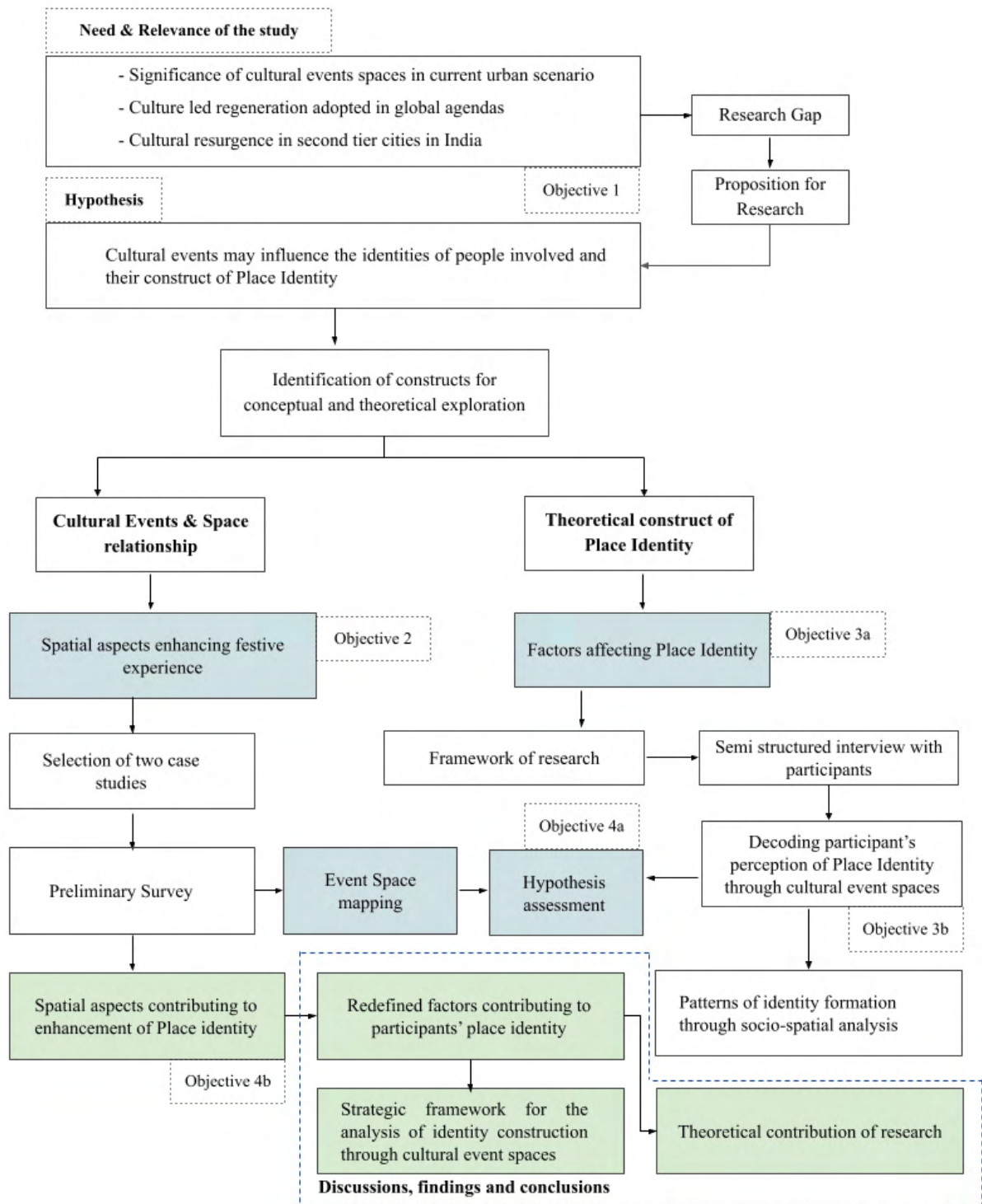


Figure 3.1 : Research Methodology Overview

3.3 Situating the research design in the larger philosophical domain : Need for Interdisciplinarity

As society becomes more global, a multitude of emerging identities have evolved which are discussed in different ways across various disciplines. As boundaries become merged, distances reduced with cultures becoming global, the concept of identity becomes blurred. Most of the existing disciplines fail to consider the context of where identity is situated. Thus, for a more comprehensive understanding of the concepts of identity, a revised approach which considers the role of physical settings in identity constructions is required. A mixed method (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2021; Wellington & Hammond, 2012) approach is adopted along with the constructivist interpretive paradigm approach. Discussing relevant concepts in the disciplines of phenomenology, human geography and social psychology, along with embedded case study, this chapter demonstrates how those concepts can be constructively brought together for this research, and identifies significant connections between these disciplines which facilitate research in this context. The discussions from this chapter form the basis for the interdisciplinary framework of analysis developed in this thesis.

3.4 Theoretical underpinning of the methodology adopted

Building on the discussions in the previous chapter regarding the need for interdisciplinary approaches in identity research, an interdisciplinary framework of analysis has been developed for this research. As spatial-identity is a complex process, involving multiple layers of information related to people's spatial practices, a strong analytical framework embedded in interdisciplinarity is required. The various interdisciplinary concepts which aided in the development of the framework of analysis have been discussed below. The various assumptions and interpretations that have been made during analysis of qualitative data have also been explained.

3.4.1 Phenomenology : Interpretative phenomenological analysis

Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis (IPA) is a commonly used methodology used by researchers for the unbiased descriptive study of people's lived experiences. Phenomenology was the first movement towards the understanding of human embeddedness in spatial environments. The underlying foundation for IPA was the result of contributions by

philosophers such as Martin Heidegger, Jean Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau Ponty (Smith et al., 2009). This research utilises Smith's insights based on the seminal work of these philosophers. Edward Husserl first proposed Phenomenology as a method, though his philosophy was based on 'Phenomenological Reduction' or 'Bracketing' which essentially tries to capture the essence of a phenomenon by eliminating various layers attached to it (Smith et al., 2009). Heidegger, however, critiqued his theory and introduced the concept of 'existential phenomenology' which discussed the notion of immersion of the self in the surroundings to extract meanings pertaining to any phenomenon (Mills et al., 2009). Existential phenomenology also finds place in the discussions by Ponty (Howell, 2013). In this research, the temporal phenomenon of festivals have been analysed in the backdrop of static everyday urbanism. The intent of using this approach was to analyse the influence of the spatial environment during festivals on the festival experience by the participants and their role in reinforcing spatial-identity in each of the case studies under consideration. IPA thus gives a qualitative approach towards understanding how people make sense of their experiences. This approach is particularly important as the case studies of this research are context dependent on factors such as social, historical and cultural, which in turn have the utmost impact on identity. Thus, the complexity of the research context could be captured through IPA as it enables understanding of people's place experience beyond their self-consciousness. People-place association is the crux of the research, which IPA as a method has been able to address.

3.4.2 Positionality

To comprehend the essence of festival urbanism, it was essential to understand the context as well as related social, cultural and historical aspects in each of the case studies. Furthermore, as a researcher, I was also required to interpret these experiences and perceptions of the participants in the festivals. The research thus focussed on an 'emic' account of participants' lived experiences, and perceptions, which were documented, and interpreted as an insider perspective of the festivals under study. From this standpoint, the empathetic understanding of the participants' experiences has helped me to probe responses during the interview sessions, which resulted in the collection of rich data during the research. However, care has been taken not to influence the process and results due to any personal biases. Proper justification has been provided along the way for the research decisions made at various stages of the research. As a result, transparency has been maintained as much as possible from my position as a researcher.

The various assumptions, interpretations and conclusions have been described in detail throughout the research.

3.4.3 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are two very important factors that a researcher should be concerned about while designing the research, analysis of results and judging the quality of the research (Patton, 2002). This research adopts the quality standard proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) which are Credibility, Transferability, Dependability and Confirmability.

Table 3.6 : Validity and reliability in this research

Standard	Positivist/Post positivist enquiry	Constructivist inquiry	Steps adopted in this research
<i>Truth value</i>	<i>Internal validity</i> Equivalence of data of enquiry and phenomena they represent	<i>Credibility</i> Prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, and/or member checking	- Adopting an emic stance - Disseminating in conferences for unbiased feedback on methods and choices
<i>Applicability</i>	<i>External validity</i> Generalizability	<i>Transferability</i> Description of context to assess similarity	- Chapter separately describing in detail the context of the case studies - Detailed description of the methodological choices and philosophical positioning
<i>Consistency</i>	<i>Reliability</i> Producing stable results	<i>Dependability</i> Trackability of expected instability of data	- Detailed description of the data collection process, analysis,

			interpretations and inferences
			- Presenting the various assumptions based on which data is interpreted
<i>Neutrality</i>	<i>Objectivity</i>	<i>Confirmability</i>	- Continuous reflection of the researcher throughout the research process
	Methods explicated; replicable; investigator one-step removed from object of study	Triangulation of data; practice of reflexivity by investigator	

3.4.4 Ethical framework for conduct of research

Ethical considerations were a critical part of the research process as the researcher engaged with the participants during the conduct of case studies. Ethical practices were embedded in the Interpretative Phenomenological Approach used for this research (Smith et al., 2009). Through this approach, different phenomenological approaches were weaved together to propose the methodology which was able to comprehend people's relationship in an ethical manner. Since the researcher was a native of the case study city, the research was rooted in vocabulary of the participants' native language. The participants were fully informed about the subject and objective of the research before the conduct of the interviews and survey. The anonymity of confidentiality of the participants was maintained throughout.

Understanding the moral implications of the research, ethical measures were adopted while processing and analysing of data and preparation of the report.

3.5 Process of selection of cases

The selection of the cases under study was based on the primary aim of the research of analysing the role of cultural events in the construction of place-identity in multicultural urban environments. For this purpose, the festivals under study were considered keeping the

multicultural aspect in view. Festivals with a maximum urban interface were identified in the city of Guwahati, in order to facilitate a generalised framework for future reference. A few other criteria were also considered such as explained in detail below.

Festivals with strong event-space relationships were specifically chosen and their location within multicultural urban environments in order to understand the negotiations, appropriations and associations between people and places.

3.5.1 The Temporal aspect

The recurrence of festivals was an important criteria for the selection of the cases under study as they reinforced place memory which further enhanced spatial-identity. Thus, festivals which were celebrated annually and had a duration of more than a day were considered. The duration of a festival is an integral aspect as festivals with a longer duration pervades the space of the city and the everyday urbanism thus leaving a lasting impact on the festival participants as well as the residents of the city. Only when a festival has lasted for an elongated duration of time can it be termed as ‘time out of time’.

3.5.2 The Spatial aspect

The spatiality of the festivals under study give meaning to various elements in the urban environment and in turn influences the urban form. The presence of perceived or factual aspects of the events, conceived or designed aspects of the events and the lived realm or the lived essence during festivals were considered while analysing the spatial aspects of the cases under study.

Secondly, festivals which link various focal points of the city because of their spatial characteristics making them a coherent entity at a particular time during the festival were considered as a criteria.

The third aspect was the evaluation of festival event-spaces based on Frenchman’s (2004) seven parameters of events-space relationship. Based on these parameters, the spatial relationship of the cases under study were analysed.

Finally, festivals with mass mobility of visitors were selected as they often shape the physical environment and give a particular movement and gathering pattern to the urban context adding character to its streets and squares. The urban context therefore was taken into account such that the selected cases were of diverse spatial contexts.

3.5.3 Socio-Cultural aspect

The socio-cultural aspect is an important aspect of any study related to cultural events such as festivals. As festivals are specific to cultures, involving indigenous practices of the communities involved, they are unique and representative of these respective communities.

3.6 The selected cases

The festivals considered for study were based on the criterias as discussed earlier and the geographical location of these festivals was considered in a second tier city with a multicultural population. Each of these festivals were unique in their own right though a common thread connected them as they all were spread over the city spaces, transforming and imparting identity to these spaces during their time of celebration. They also involved a multitude of people and a huge gathering pattern. Extending for a minimum duration of four days, these festivals have diverse forms of spatial manifestation. Thus, considering the temporal, spatial and socio-cultural aspect, the two cases of Chhath Puja and Ambubachi Mela in the city of Guwahati were chosen for the purpose of this research. A preliminary study on the visual culture of Magh Bihu was conducted prior to the main case studies to set the premise for carrying out further work in the research (included in Annexure 4).

Bihu is a festival connected with the seasonal and agricultural cycle and is an integral part of Assamese culture. It is one of the most important cultural markers of the Assamese community. There are three kinds of Bihu celebrated at different times of the year- the Bohag or Rongali Bihu celebrated in spring, the Kati or Kongali Bihu celebrated in autumn, and the Magh or Bhogali Bihu celebrated after the harvesting season i.e. in winter.

Chhath Puja is the biggest festival for the people of Bihar living within Bihar or across the country or world. The festival is often referred to as “*Mahaparv*”. It is celebrated roughly over a period of four days involving many rituals. While being a non-native festival in the context

of Guwahati, and originally celebrated in isolation by individuals and their families, this festival has now become a community event in Guwahati occupying large spaces along the banks of the Brahmaputra throughout the entire city.

Ambubachi Mela is a weeklong festival held around the middle of June in the Kamakhya Temple Complex. The Temple celebrates the harmony between the feminine reproductive energy and fertility power of nature. This is a yearly fair which is celebrated during the monsoon season that falls during the Assamese month, Ahaar. This mela witnesses a footfall in the range of millions of devotees and has been heralded as the largest festival in the entire North-East of India.

These two chosen cases of Chhath Puja and Ambubachi Mela were further analysed to interpret their role in reinforcing spatial identity as elaborated in the later chapters.

3.7 Research methods/tools to document event-space relationship during festivals

The everyday life and urban environment transforms to accommodate the celebration of festivals thus, adding meaning to the spatial elements. The socio-spatial attributes of the temporal cultural event spaces were analysed through the Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis (IPA) approach as described in section 3.4.1. Before embarking into field studies, relevant literature on festivals such as their historical background, myths and traditions associated with them, their nature of spatial manifestation and socio-cultural and religious significance were consulted through archive research. After gaining insights on festivals, on-site studies during festivals were conducted. Various data collection methods such as interviews, participant observation and photo elicitation were involved. To arrive at the methods, experimental pilot studies were conducted for smaller events in the city which are not a part of the report. With the aid of these methods, spatial aspects enhancing the experience during festivals were identified to cater to the objectives of the research.

3.7.1 Archive Research

Indian festivals often have a rich cultural and historical background and are richly documented and written about. However, in the context of the festivals under study for this research, a few of the phenomena under study were evolving and not much was recorded yet. Hence, apart from archival research material of textual data, historical maps, books, etc., current studies published in reputed publications, news articles, blogs were also consulted to have a holistic overview.

3.7.2 Semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interview was an attempt to interpret participant's perception of the festival (Given, 2008; Miller et al., 2003). The interview was planned around four thoughts of inquiry. Participants had the flexibility to formulate their answers which allowed the researcher to interpret the spatial settings of the festivals based on their narratives. This enabled to establish links between the narratives of the various participants' perception of their spatial settings and the festival space. The various methods for formulation of the guiding questions and the preparations undertaken before them are further explained in the coming sections.

3.7.2.1 Formulation of the questions

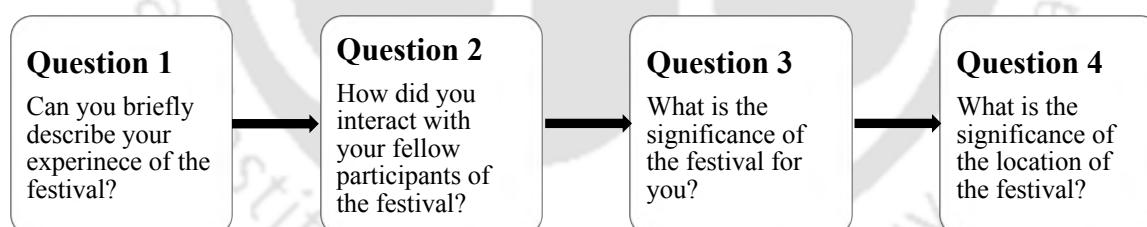


Figure 3.2 : Guiding questions for the semi-structured interview

Qualitative interviewing is a particularly useful method for accessing an individual's attitudes and values. Open-ended and flexible questions are more likely to get considered responses as compared to closed questions and thus allow the researcher to gain valuable insights into the participant's views, interpretations, understandings, experiences and opinions. However, some guiding questions allow the researcher to maintain the focus of inquiry at the same time allowing the flexibility of the participants' response. The conceptual framework based on the nine aspects of event-space relationship (as explained in the previous chapter) formed the basis

of these guiding questions (Fig. 3.2). This was done to ensure that the responses of the various interviewees were comparable and the focus on deriving the spatial qualities that reinforce festival experience were met. Following this process, four questions were formulated that guided the interview and also acted as a memory aid for the researcher to cover the topics under inquiry.

Table 3.7 : Formulating the guiding questions

Attributes of Event Space relationship		Questions
1.	Narrative	What is the significance of the festival for you?
2.	Embeddedness	
3.	Intimacy	How did you interact with your fellow participants of the festival?
4.	Territory	What is the significance of the location for the celebration of the festival?
5.	Scale Sensuality Granularity Triangulation Movement	Can you briefly describe your experience of the festival?

The process of data collection required proficiency in the language of the participant's, familiarity with the geographical location, historical and festival background knowledge, acquaintance with the local culture, in order to present a cohesive and meaningful data. Keeping these aspects in mind, the researcher being a native of the city was an important factor in the entire process.

3.7.2.2 Purposive sampling

The participants for the interview were selected through the process of purposive sampling. This process was followed to ensure maximum quality of information collected from a small number of participant interviewees (Given, 2008; Lewis-Beck et al., 2003). With millions of participants in a festival, purposive sampling, even though follows an inherent bias, ensured efficiency of data collection without getting lost in the sea of attendees. Hence, the participants were chosen keeping in mind their empathy towards the research topic and their diverse

experience of the facets of the festival. Many of the participants were selected based on the process of ‘snowball’ wherein with the reference of one interviewee another is identified (Given, 2008).

3.7.2.3 Conduct of the interview process

Qualitative interview with the aid of the guiding questions was used to capture participant’s attitudes and values. As the events were spread over a few days, interviews were conducted across the various festival sites. Because of the presence of ambient noise, the interview was penned down instead of voice recording. Field notes were also taken to document the perception and interpretation of the researcher in order to analyse the rich data on site.

3.7.2.4 Participant observation

Participant observation was an integral aspect of this research which allowed the researcher to observe the field of study without any preconceived notion about the people or activities involved. Thus, this method acted both as a data collection tool apart from an analytical tool (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010). The researcher had the flexibility and freedom to observe unstructured as a passive participant while conducting the field work. This in return allowed the researcher to collect information rich data of conscious and unconscious behavioural patterns of the participants through sketches, field notes and photographs.

3.7.2.5 Transcribing the interviews for analysis

Transcripts acted as the first-hand information which when compared with the digital still images acted as guidelines for their interpretation of the cultural construct of the people being interviewed (Given, 2008; Lewis-Beck et al., 2003). They also acted as references which validated the data collected on the field. The transcripts were analysed by extracting keywords and phrases based on the nine processes used for formulating the guiding questions. These keywords and phrases were then analysed further to understand the spatial attributes contributing to enhancing the festival experience.

3.7.3 Physical traces observation

Apart from analysing the festival spaces during their duration of their celebration, physical traces observation method was utilised to observe these spaces before and after the commencement of the event. In the absence of participants, this method allowed the researcher

to document the planning and organisation before the festivals as well as the physical traces of activities and spatial changes after the festival (Mills et al., 2009). This was done to understand the appropriation of space and how a space transforms with time and context. Traces often include decorations, materials used for temporal structures, appropriation of spaces for multiple activities, accommodation of millions of devotees, signages, traffic, site camps, etc. which as Rahul Mehrotra has pointed out in his study of Kumbh Mela, mimics a fully functioning city. These observations served the purpose of documenting the spatial attributes which enhance a festive experience.

3.7.4 Images & Video documentation

Both video and still images were used to document the physical features of the festivals under study. They acted as supplement along with the oral testimonies from the interviews. Images and videos sometimes also recorded items or events that might have slipped in the testimonies. Being visual in nature, this digital form of data collection also helped in retaining the essence of the festival long after it was over and helped the researcher to go back for reference whenever needed.

3.8 Research methods/tools to document Place-Identity

Place-identity has been theoretically categorised based on its conception, perception and interpretation into three processes of Place Experience, Place Attachment and Place Meaning which was derived from literature review and preliminary interview with residents of Guwahati city. The attributes of spatial-identity under each category were further analysed and explored. The following section details out the methods used to conduct the preliminary contextual studies, framing of questions for questionnaires, etc. for generating Place-Identity maps.

3.8.1 Preliminary contextual studies

According to hermeneutics, understanding the background of any phenomenon is essential for insights into the aspects that are being researched. Thus, before embarking on the primary case studies, a preliminary case study was undertaken. The preliminary contextual study was conducted with the purpose of strategizing the methodology for the main case studies. The aim of this study was to unearth what the city of Guwahati meant to its residents to infer how

respondents were associated with a place and the reasons behind such associations with the urban settings along with their aspirations for the future of the place. The study was conducted through archive research from sources like books or articles, blogs, and social websites to create a theoretical base along with residents' mental image of their city. The major intent of the preliminary study was to identify ways in which people perceive places. This study was used to validate the fourteen parameters of Place Identity derived from literature. Owing to the complex nature of people-space relationship, the preliminary study proved helpful in the formulation of the questionnaire for the primary case studies. Fig. 3.3 illustrates the methodology adopted for the preliminary study.

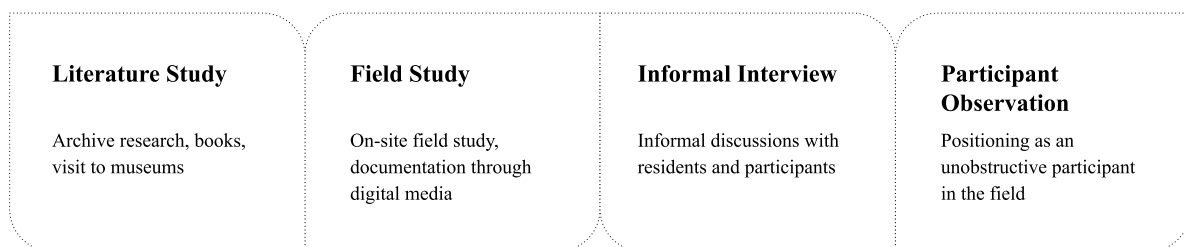


Figure 3.3 : Methodology for preliminary study

The semi structured nature of the questionnaire allowed the respondents to speak spontaneously and the respondents were chosen through purposive sampling as the sample of the population surveyed was small. The discussions generated from these questions (**Figure 3.4**) were utilised to address the various Place Identity factors derived from literature as can be seen in Annexure 2. This helped in unearthing associative links between the participants and their city.

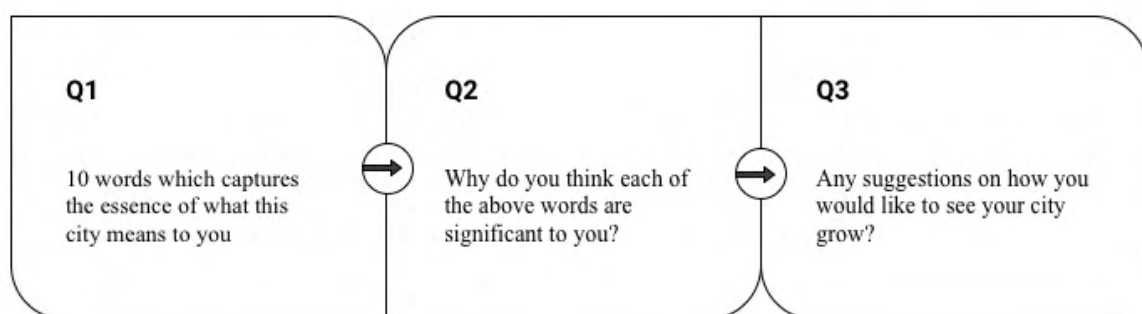


Figure 3.4 : Questionnaire for the preliminary semi-structured interview

3.8.2 Semi-Structured interview

Data collection was carried out through in-depth qualitative semi-structured interviews which was identified as a potentially rich method through the exploratory study employed for the main case study. Based on the interpretations from the preliminary interviews on place perception, these semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants to evaluate their perception of the cultural event spaces under study. The interviews guided by the fourteen aspects of Place Identity was conducted with an attempt to decipher people-place-event associations formed due to each factor.

3.8.2.2 Preparation of the semi-structured questionnaire

The semi-structured questionnaire was constructed after extensive literature review and preliminary survey. Appropriate wording, sequence was followed and the option for scaling as well as open remarks added flexibility and ensured that optimum information was captured. Each of the questions in the questionnaire aimed at probing a specific aspect of Place Identity dimensions derived from literature review. The questionnaire is attached in Annexure 3 along with a sample of how the responses were collected.

3.8.2.2 Sampling process for conducting the semi-structured interview

A purposive sampling was used in the conduct of the interviews with emphasis given on participants who have experienced the phenomenon of interest. There were different age groups under which the sample was stratified. Care was also taken to ensure that participants belonged to diverse cultural and social backgrounds and gender.

3.9 Analysis

The analysis of the data collected from the semi-structured interview employed an interdisciplinary framework which was developed from literature review as discussed in the previous chapter. Following the analysis, various interconnected themes emerged regarding socio-spatial behaviour of the participants and place identity. The interconnections and themes were crucial aspects in achieving a socio-spatial understanding of place-identity through multi-cultural celebrations in urban spaces.

3.9.1 Analysis of data collected from interview for socio-spatial themes using IPA method

The narratives of the participants were coded and interpreted using the IPA method which allowed several themes to emerge. These themes were then analysed, interpreted and categorised into three sub-categories for their socio-cultural and spatial relevance.

i) More spatial than socio-cultural

When the participant's narratives placed more emphasis on the physical elements/factors (form, function, visual and aesthetic elements) of the event places defining their experiences of the cultural events, the emergent themes were assumed to be more spatial than socio-cultural.

ii) More socio-cultural than spatial

When the participant's narratives placed more emphasis on the socio-cultural elements/factors of the event places (sense of privacy, religious attachments, lifestyle etc) defining their experiences, the emergent themes were assumed to be more socio-cultural than spatial.

iii) Equally socio-cultural and spatial

When the participant's narratives implied equal emphasis on both socio-cultural and spatial elements (sense of enclosure, familiarity with places, etc) defining their experiences, the emergent themes were assumed to be equally socio-cultural and spatial.

3.9.2 Analysis of data collected from interview for Place Identity motives and their socio-spatial relevance

The themes under all three categories discussed above were analysed for their interconnections with the fourteen Place Identity parameters and their socio-cultural and spatial relevance/significance in participants' event-place experience to unearth their influence on identity constructions.

3.10 Research methods/tools to interpret and analyse spatial aspects of cultural event spaces

3.10.1 Visual analysis

Cities as a symbolic text become an inscription by the people and activities contributing to the visual urban imagery; one that operates as both a product and producer of changes in the urban fabric (Gottdiener, 2010). The relationship of the built fabric with the open spaces, buildings with adjoining structures, foreground and background, and other such visual aspects add to the cohesive visual quality of any spatial settings. By personal observation, six precincts where the selected cultural events are manifested were analysed to extract the characteristic elements of the precincts that contribute to the visual quality.

3.10.2 Perceptual analysis

Place is a mental construct formed by the mental image as the mind organises and makes sense of their surroundings which is different from person to person. As such, such mental images are simplified, partial and retain traces of elements of high identity value. The transcripts from the semi-structured questionnaire were analysed to unearth the associative links of people with various elements of the place. These elements were then analysed holistically through the fourteen identified factors contributing to formation of Place Identity and their interconnections to socio-spatial aspects of the place. The fifth chapter elaborates the processes and inferences.

3.10.3 Socio-cultural analysis

Through personal observation and images, the manner in which the physical aspects of the precincts induces activities and social behaviour was analysed. Informal discussions with users and stakeholders of the place also helped in analysing the socio-spatial aspects contributing to the sociability of such spaces.

3.10.4 Functional analysis

Socio-spatial spaces for festivals or performing rituals are not organised or part of the formal structure of a city and come under the category of temporal spaces. They are sometimes everyday streets transforming into sites for social interaction hosting communal gathering or sacred spaces with symbolic importance. Space needs activity and meaning to complete itself as a place. Festivals form the backdrop to understand a space through its special activities.

These socio-spatial spaces where festivals are celebrated can be compared to public spaces in terms of spatial settings, activities as well as the meaning attached to them. The five dimensions/ aspects of public space inclusiveness, pleasurability, meaningful activities, safety and comfort thus form an integral part of festive spaces. Each of the precincts under study had diverse functionalities forming diverse associational ties with its users.

3.10.5 Morphological analysis

The various spatial locations of the cases under study were analysed for their spatial configuration in order to identify spatial characteristics and development patterns. The spatial configuration of the areas under study were documented and mapped through street patterns, plot patterns and built form through figure-ground and street pattern studies. In this manner, the spatial characteristics of the event places were analysed to gain a better understanding in socio-spatial context.

3.10.6 Temporal analysis

Cultural event spaces will be explored as a tool to understand how they function as informal arenas wherein social identities metamorphose in the context of the changing social and spatial organisation of the city. Urban festivals are celebrated in existing urban spaces which are part of the formal built structure of the city. Some of the spaces may be used temporarily as sites for these festivals where time and space are always confined. This can bring out some interesting observations on how these urban festival spaces transform with time and context.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter proposes the explorations for the formation of the framework for methodological conduct of the research by describing the methodological approaches for inquiry and analytical strategies. Each method and tool has been described in detail as per the sequence of the detailed methodology. The following chapters elaborate on the contextual aspects by demonstrating the ways in which the methods and tools have been employed in the research process, validation of hypothesis and formulation of strategic framework.



Chapter 4: ANALYSIS OF SPATIAL ASPECTS OF CULTURAL EVENT SPACES CONTRIBUTING TO PLACE IDENTITY

The intent of this chapter is to expand on the spatial qualities of cultural event spaces which play a significant role in enhancing the participants' construct of Place Identity. In the first section, a broad overview of the case study city, Guwahati has been presented. This section also outlines the preliminary study conducted before the main case studies. The intent of this section is to provide a prologue to the subsequent sections and chapters. A narrative account of the case studies is presented to provide a holistic overview of the two cultural events and to get an in depth insight into their complex, layered characteristics. The second section of the chapter is the analysis of the spatial characteristics of the cultural event spaces. This was carried out by probing at their visual, morphological, functional, social and temporal dimensions. The third part is the analysis through phenomenological tools of the spatial characteristics of cultural event spaces enhancing the festive experience of participants. This chapter concludes by deducing a set of spatial aspects which play a significant role in enhancing participants' construct of Place Identity. It is proposed that these set of spatial aspects should be taken into consideration while conducting any intervention strategy, providing the basis on which the strategic framework is formulated in the concluding chapter.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter narrows down the wider context of the research and specifically explains in depth through the case studies selected for the conduct of this research. An overview of the case study city selected for the research is provided to have a prior understanding of the intricate layers of the various aspects of the city. The broader domain of identity negotiation in multicultural urban environments is explored through the multicultural festivals celebrated in the case study city, Guwahati. The crucial role of spatial practices occurring in these urban event spaces and their influence on identity construction and negotiations is explained in this chapter. Furthermore, the characteristics of the festivals under study are described. Before conducting the main case study, a perception study was conducted which probed resident's perception of their city and analysed through the place identity factors derived from literature (presented in Chapter 5). The inferences from the perception study, and how they informed the overall research aims and objectives for the main case study are discussed.

4.2 The city of Guwahati

Located in the far secluded terrains of north eastern corner of India, Guwahati is a city with significant antiquity and continued cultural significance. Having undergone significant spatial transformations, this city is a contested space, where new layers of meaning are added to the urban spaces. The description of the socio-spatial transformation of the city is provided in the following sections.

4.2.1 The representational space of Guwahati produced by mythical and symbolic narratives

Mythical and symbolic narratives have established the socio-cultural practices in Guwahati and have been instrumental in evolving the spatial practices (perceived space), the representations of space (conceived space) and the representational space (lived space) thus producing the social space. Guwahati, or ancient Pragjyotishpura (the Light of the East), the capital city of Assam in the Northeastern part of India is replete with numerous legends and myths and its antiquity is well established in Hindu mythology. It is an ancient city that finds mention in the epics and Puranas. As mentioned in the Kalika Purana (10th century A.D.), Brahma created the stars in Pragjyotishpur and hence the city was a reference to the city of Indra (Barua, 1969).

This explanation of the etymology has been accepted by most historians of Assam. Another explanation put forward by Gait, emphasises the importance of Pragjyotishpura as the land where the Tantric form of Hinduism originated, thus breaking down the etymology as 'Prag' meaning former or eastern and 'Jyotisha', meaning a star, astrology or shining. This ancient city was the capital of several dynasties during the epic period such as Narakasura, followed by his son, Bhagadatta as mentioned in the Mahabharata. There are numerous references in Hindu Mythology about this ancient city which was mentioned as Pragjyotisha in the Mahabharata and Kamarupa in the Puranas and Tantras. During the mediaeval time the city of Pragjyotishpura assumed a new name. It was known as Gauhati or Guahata. Another theory behind the origin of its name was that Guha (cave) and Hati (row) translated to a city with a row of caves. It was previously known as 'Gauhati' during the British era.

4.2.2 Socio-spatial continuities and changes leading to the shaping of the city

Ancient Pragjyotishpura went through various morphological transitions at different times extending from the southern side of the present Guwahati to the foothills of the Meghalaya plateau during the Varman dynasty i.e. from 15th century A.D. to 17th century A.D and upto the north bank of the Brahmaputra river in the mediaeval period during the rule of the Ahom kings (Choudhury, 1978). Kamakhya constituted the core of the ancient city. However due to natural decay the temple lost its importance until it was rediscovered in the early part of the 16th century. This earmarked a very significant event in the development of the city. The temple was rebuilt by King Biswa Singha (1549-1550), the founder of the Koch kingdom in the western part of Assam. Situated on the banks of the Brahmaputra and the foothills of the Shillong plateau, Guwahati has been an important river port for administrative and trading purposes. As mentioned by Gait (1963), the relocation of the capital of the Koch Kingdom to North Guwahati (northern part of present day Guwahati City) earmarked its transition into a city of eminence.

However, after the invasion of the Mughals, who had initially set up their base in Hajo, a small town located 16km northwest of Guwahati, the capital was shifted from North Guwahati to Guwahati in 1639 A.D. This period marked the mediaeval phase in the growth of the city until Guwahati came under the domination of the Ahom Kingdom in 1665 A.D. (Fig. 4.1). During

[illegible]

The growth of modern Guwahati ensued after the advent of the British during the mid 18th century when the city was used as the headquarters of the British Administration during the initial days. The British initiated the first formal spatial organisation of the city by setting up the municipality which roughly covered an area of 6.4 km² (Fig. 4.2). Most of the city was limited to the core with four main market places, viz. Chowk Bazar, or present day Uzan Bazar in the east, with another one near Bharalumukh in the west, and two others respectively at Paltan Bazar in the south and Fancy Bazar in the midwest during 1850 A.D. Most of the older core administrative and commercial areas of Guwahati like Uzan Bazar, Fancy Bazar, Pan Bazar, Kachari and Paltan Bazar have developed along the banks of the Brahmaputra. Other amenities such as police stations and schools and health centres were also established alongside. Two other major developments that developed on the river bank were the Kamakhya

Temple on the Nilachal Hills and the Northeast Frontier Railways Headquarters in Maligaon. Guwahati had retained most of this spatial organisation in the early part of the 20th century, limiting its growth only to the core around present day Panbazar, Fancy Bazar and from Guwahati to Shillong in 1974. However with the setup of Dispur as the capital of Guwahati, the city's urban population grew substantially along with expansion to new areas such as North Guwahati. The built-up-area of the city thus extended out of its confines of the old commercial core of the city towards the city limits and fringe areas (Fig. 4.3).

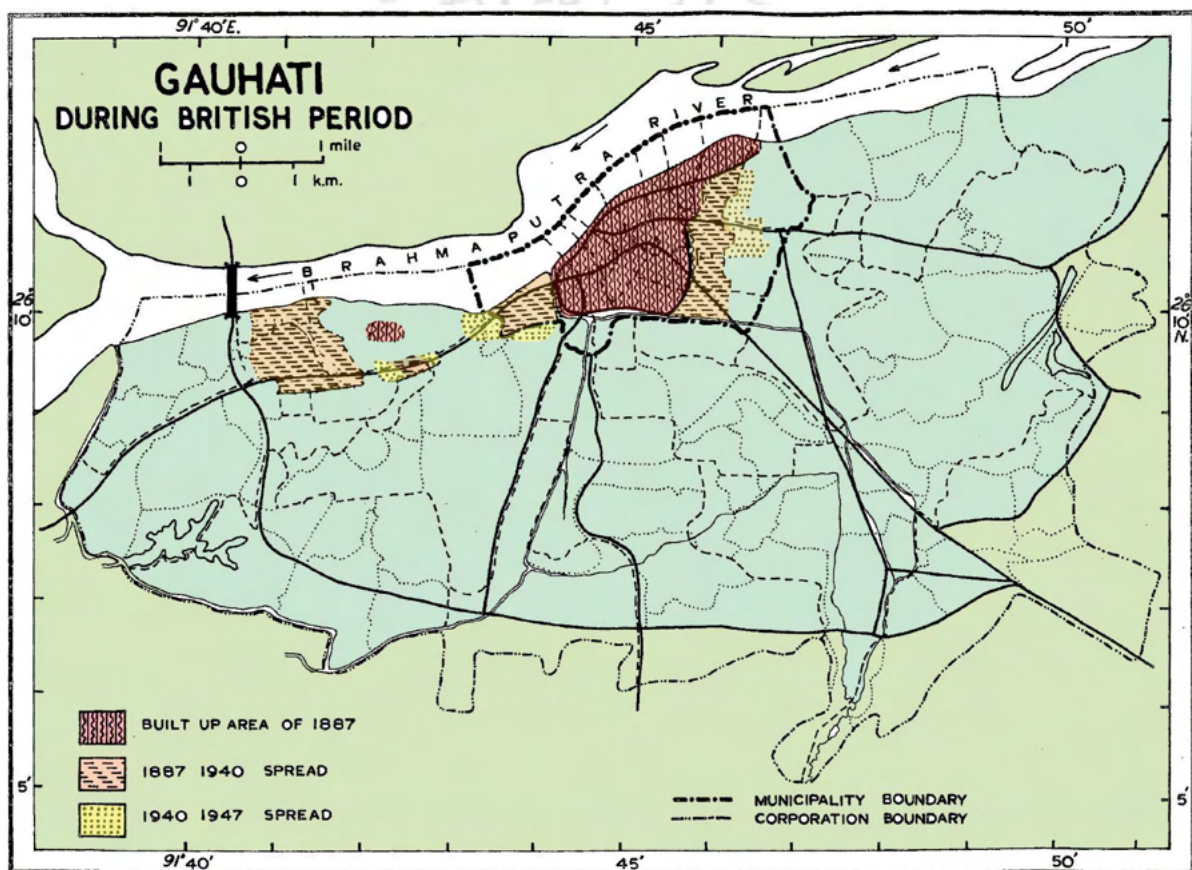


Figure 4.2: Expansion of Guwahati during Colonial Period

As any other city, Guwahati has grown through migration in different periods in history. The 1971 census showed that 59 per cent of Guwahati's population had migrated to the city (Centre for Urban Equity, 2014). There has been rural-urban migration from within the state, inter-state migration with a large proportion from Bihar, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Meghalaya and Uttar Pradesh, intra-state migration from other districts of Assam and a majority of international migration from Bangladesh and Nepal.

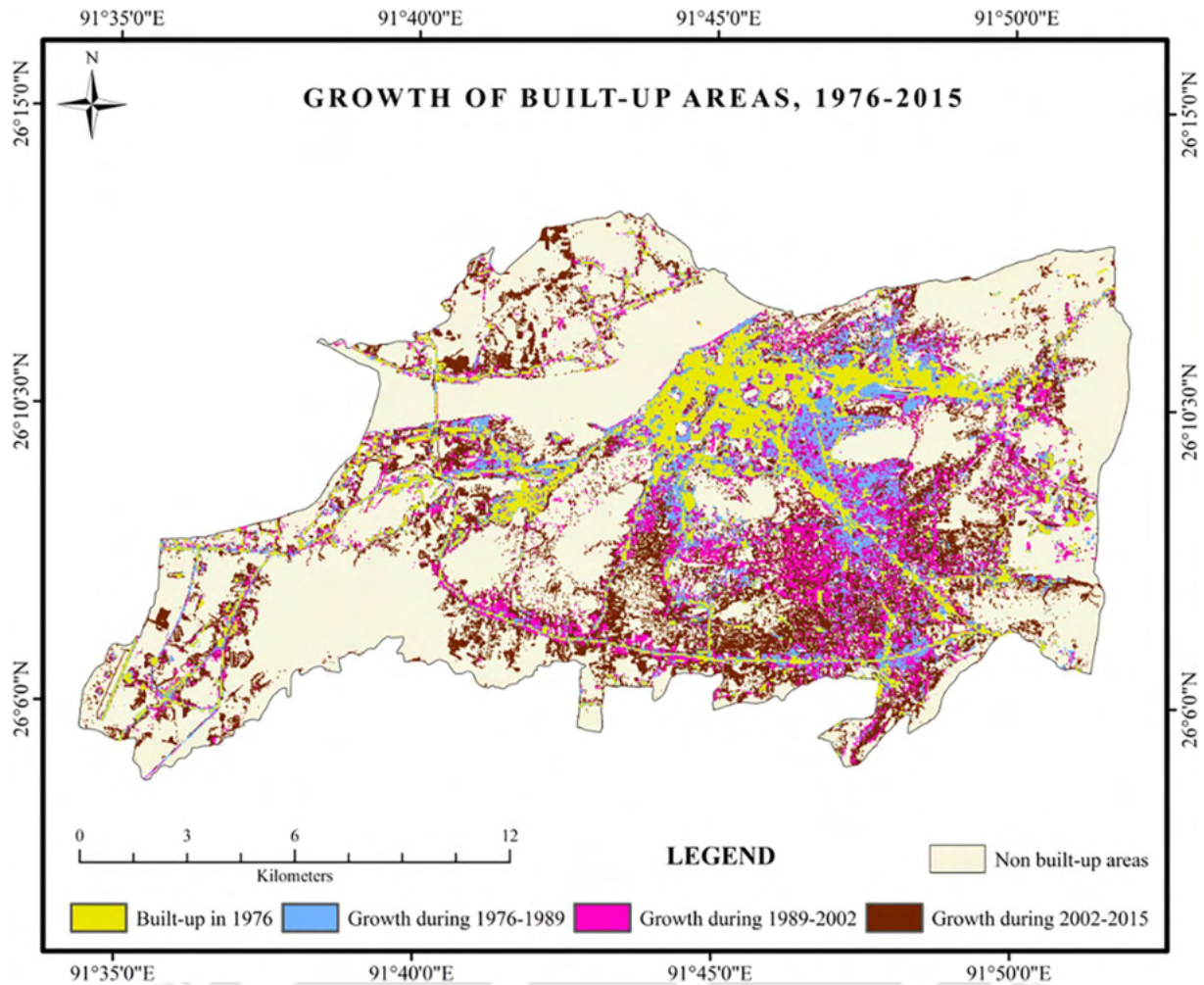


Figure 4.3: Spatial extent of Built-up-area of Guwahati (*Source: Pawe & Saikia, 2020*)

Despite being the capital of Assam, Guwahati has a very low level of urbanisation as compared to other states of India. In the previous decade, that is, 2001-11 (Table 4.1), the urbanisation rate slowed down to 2.5 per cent p.a., which is lower than that of India (of 2.8 percent p.a.) (Centre for Urban Equity, 2014). One of the impediments to the development of the urban fabric of Guwahati is the geo-hydrological features of the city itself. The river Brahmaputra runs along the entire length of the city and thus most of the older core administrative and commercial areas developed along its banks. Later on, the capital complex of Assam (the Secretariat) was developed in the south-east of the older core area connected by a single link road. The Guwahati-Shillong (GS) link road, which is the main corridor connecting the older core area to Dispur, has developed as an important commercial accessway with a densely-built residential area in the inner parts. Ganeshguri has developed as a sub-centre in the south along this corridor. Rapid development has led to new residential and commercial areas in the

erstwhile peripheral zones of the city leading to expansion of the city. The further expansion of the city in the south, however, is restricted by the foothills of the Shillong plateau.



Figure 4.4: An aerial view of Guwahati highlighting the major arterial roads (*Source: GMDA, 2014*)

A critical evaluation of Guwahati's street network by Hemani and Das (2016), highlights the fact that the city has poor connectivity as there are only a few major roads while the arterial roads are mostly dead-ends, resulting in reduced permeability and increased stress on major

routes (Fig. 4.4). As the city is flanked by hills all around and forms a valley, expansion is restricted in most areas which could be the reason impeding a proper street connectivity layout.

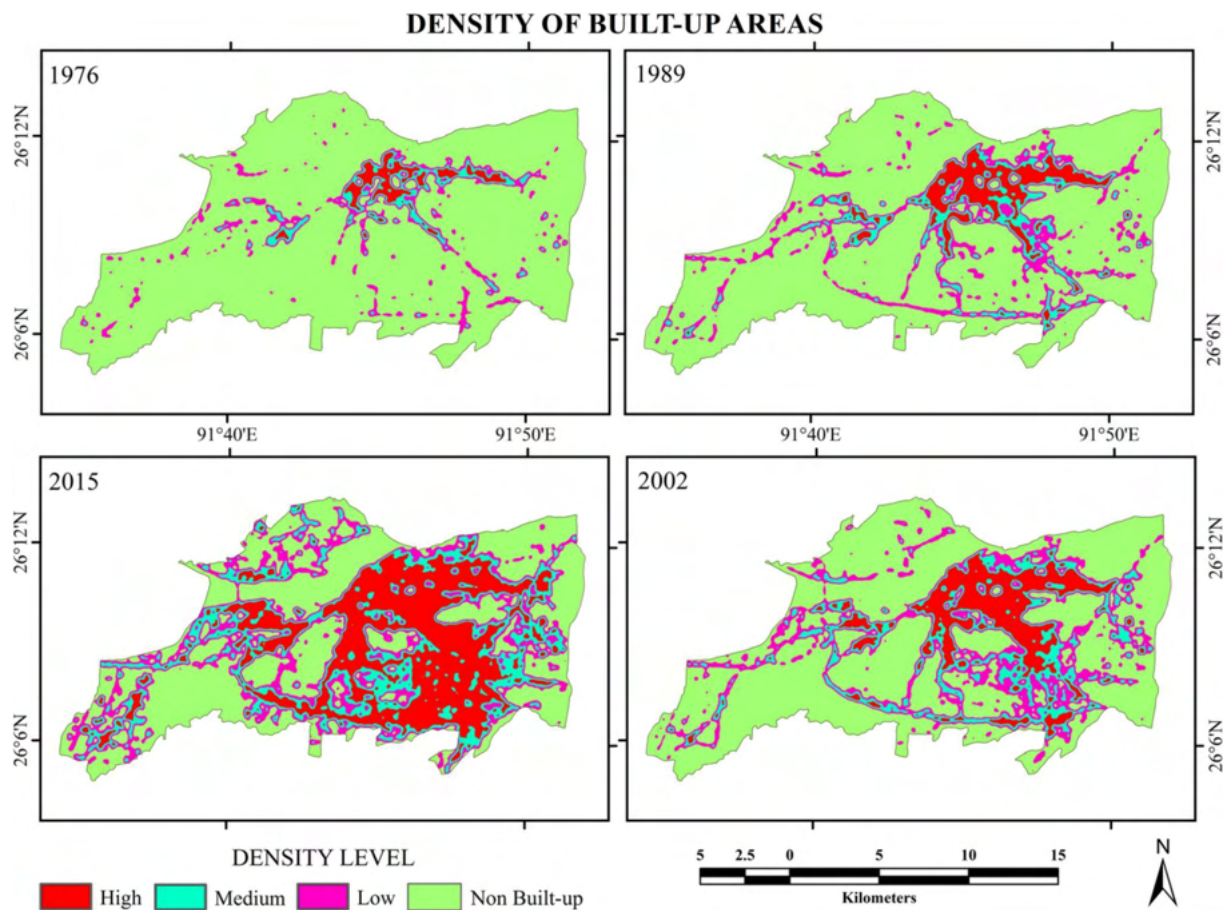


Figure 4.5: Spatio temporal analysis of variation in built-up-area density levels showing the expansion from the old city core towards outer city fringes (*Source: Pawe & Saikia, 2020*)

The migration of different cultural groups into the city over time and their certain economic activities, the attachments to ethnic, religious and linguistic identity have manifested in the form of many community centric settlements (Mahadevia et al., 2014). For example, Lakhtokia and Machkhowa has a predominance of Assamese Muslims; Hindi-speaking communities from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan are in Paltan Bazar, Fancy Bazar and Athgaon; Bengali-speaking communities are in Pandu, and Maligaon and the Railway colonies; and Christians are in Christian Basti where the missionaries built churches (Saikia, 1996). More recent Muslim migrants have concentrated in Hatigaon and Sijubari. Migrants from Bihar

continue to flock to market areas and transportation hubs such as Maligaon and Narengi. Many tribes have concentrated in some peripheral hills around the city. This has led a multifaceted identity to Guwahati city. Guwahati has been selected by the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India as one among 98 Indian cities which will be upgraded to Smart Cities in the coming times. But in present times, Guwahati represents a composite form developed through various decades of population influx and shows a spectrum of varied urban typologies and social patterns that developed in response to the reasons mentioned above, and hence can be described as multi-layered at the best (Hemani & Das, 2016).

Table 4.1: Decadal population growth trend of Guwahati from 1901- 2011 (*Source: Census Reports of India*)

Year	Population (in millions)	Decadal Growth (%)	Year	Population (in millions)	Decadal Growth (%)
1901	0.012		1961	0.101	130.9
1911	0.013	7.03	1971	0.124	22.9
1921	0.016	32.04	1981	0.269	117.27
1931	0.022	32.26	1991	0.584	117.27
1941	0.030	35.79	2001	0.810	38.6
1951	0.044	47.36	2011	0.969	19.59

4.2.3 Socio-cultural fabric of Guwahati City

The socio-cultural environment of the people of Assam consisted of a mixture of various tribes and communities. In the prehistoric times, it consisted mainly of Mongoloids but migration over the ages led to the assimilation of various new races such as the Aryans. This was a turning point as the culture, traditions, rituals and in general, the daily way of life went through a metamorphosis. In the middle ages, during the reign of the Ahom Kings, Guwahati was witness to frequent attacks by the Mughals. As a result of the same, Muslims and Shikhs also became an integral part of the social strata of Assam. Following a similar pattern like any other city, Guwahati has grown significantly due to in-migration during different periods over the course of its history. According to the 1971 census (Table 4.2), 59 percent of Guwahati's population were migrants within Kamrup district (the district where Guwahati was located) being the

highest (17 percent). This indicated a high rural-urban migration from nearby areas. The 1970s and 1980s witnessed further in-migration which receded from 1991 onwards. Nonetheless, due to the prominence of Guwahati city in the region, migration is an inseparable part of the city (Mahadevia et al., 2015). With migration came its allied concerns of socio-economic-political issues that contributed to the rise of many ethnic movements, insurgency movements and assertion of tribal nationalisms which led to a strengthening of ethnic identities in the region (Mahadevia et al., 2014).

Table 4.2: Rate of migration to Guwahati City (Mahadevia et al., 2014)

Inter-State Migration	16.9 %
Bihar	41.9 %
West Bengal	12.6 %
Rajasthan	10.4 %
Meghalaya	10.2 %
Uttar Pradesh	9.6 %
Intra-state Migration (other districts in Assam)	15 %
Inter-country migration	10.6 %
East Pakistan (now Bangladesh)	70 %
Nepal	15.5 %

4.2.4 Festival urbanism of Guwahati : An intersection of spatial practices and representational space

As per William Hunter's observation of the religious environment of Assam in his seminal work "A Statistical Account of Assam", Hinduism was neither the primary nor the most prominent religion in the valley of Assam. There is hardly any matter or evidence regarding the religious inclinations of the original inhabitants of the region before the advent of Hinduism. Though there was evidence of Shaivism and Tranticism since ancient times. As Dr. Banikanta Kakati, the eminent scholar, in his epic volume on ancient Kamrup's religious environment emphasises the prominence of Shaivism in this region. As a result, there are

numerous Shakti peethas (Shrines) such as Shukreshwar, Umananda, Kamakhya, Ugratara amongst others in the city of Guwahati. Apart from these shrines, Vaishnav peethas such as Aswaklanta Temple, Vasistha Temple, Janardhanan Temple are of prominence in the city. Later on, other religions such as Islam, Shikhism, Christianity found their place in the social fabric of the city. There are numerous Naamghars and Xatras in and around the city such as Barpetia Naamghar, Thukubilia Bor Naamghar, Tongra Xatra to name a few.

Guwahati is known as the holy land of the Pancha Tirtha - Shaivism Peeth Shukreshwar on the South, Aswaklanta on the North, Umananda in the middle of the Brahmaputra river, oldest Shakti peeth in India Kamakhya Temple, and Vasistha Ashram form the five shrine (Panch-Tritha). Apart from these, there are numerous religious places of prominence in the city. There were community congregation places too in the city amongst which Harisabha was the most prominent. It was the melting pot of people from various divides of culture and language. Harisabha was situated right at the heart of the city in Panbazaar. The British Colonial rule brought about many changes in the socio-cultural fabric of Guwahati city. With the advent of administrative, economic and educational infrastructures such as Courthouses, Schools & Colleges, various Government departments, trade and commerce, people from various states migrated in large numbers to Guwahati permanently. They eventually felt the absence of a space where they could be a part of a community. Hence, Harisabha, a socio-cultural entity was conceived as a space that contributed to their feeling of belongingness and identity in a place that was far away from their places of origin. Harisabha was the pioneer in the celebration of various religious festivals (puja) among which, Durga Puja, Lakshmi Puja, Kali Puja, Jagadhatri Puja, Raas Yatra, Doul Yatra, Annapurna Puja and Sri Krishna Janmashtami are prominent. Specific rituals and activities pertaining to these festivals such as creating the deity for puja or the performance of vedic rituals for the puja were confined to specific families who had been carrying on these activities for generations. Apart from Harisabha, Shantisabha was another religious organisation which was situated in the old core of the city. It was established in 1938 during the auspicious Durga Puja festival. The establishment of this organisation was intricately tied to the festival of Durga Puja. Initially, the puja was held in the compound of a renowned resident of the city. Later on, the festivals started celebrating in the public domain.

4.3 Festival typology in Guwahati

The first formal classification of events was initiated by Durkhiem (2016) who classified them as either religious or secular based on their sacred or profane nature. Cultural events have been classified by various researchers based on their content, scale, location, theme, based on time/season, attitude to religion, celebrating moments, repeatability, and form of organising or financing of events (Cudny, 2014, 2016). The focus of the research is on spatial and in an urban context, hence a classification based on the nature of event spaces in Guwahati was carried out.

The spatial classification of events is firstly based on their context (urban or rural context), secondly on their type of venue (open air, closed venues, etc.), and thirdly based on the natural context which maybe of events celebrated in the mountains, seaside, river edge, etc. (Cudny, 2016). Festivals celebrated in the Indian context are varied and include diverse forms of celebration such as grand fairs or melas, yatras or pilgrimage processions to huge congregations. Some of the events are spread out across the city while others are celebrated in their place of performance. The classification of festivals in Guwahati was done based on their spatial manifestation and the spatial characteristics of the event spaces into four categories. These categories are explained further with examples in the context of the case study city, Guwahati and analysed to arrive at the criteria for choosing the festivals for analysis.

4.3.1 Natural feature based event space

Festivals celebrating natural elements and based along natural features like water bodies, hills, caves, etc. can be categorised as natural feature based event spaces (Cudny, 2016). Many of these events celebrate the natural features through prayers and other offerings such as the Chhath Puja festival celebrated along the banks of the river Brahmaputra. The divinity of the festival gets amplified when deities are brought to perform rituals in the natural features such as the immersion of Durga Devi during Durga Puja, or Chhathi Maiya during Chhath Puja.

4.3.2 Event spaces dispersed in the city

Some festivals are celebrated across various areas of the city thus transforming the entire urban landscape creating a sense of festivalisation of the entire city. One such example is the celebration of Durga Puja in Guwahati. With the proliferation of brightly lit decorated *pandals*, the urban fabric of the city reinvents itself. The celebrations occur over a period of ten days

which involves various rituals, performances, installations and food stalls enhancing the festive experience. As Thakurta (2004) observes, there is a competitive edge as communities put on a display of their creative endeavours through the decorations of the *puja pandals*. As the scale of the festival is magnanimous with new urban spaces getting added every year, this festival was beyond the scope of this research.

4.3.3 Open spaces as event spaces

In many Indian cities, large open spaces, such as *maidans* are often utilised for the celebration of cultural events. These spaces are used for multiple activities, such as a playground, which transforms temporarily as sites for cultural events. Events such as musical performances during Bohag Bihu celebrations, fairs and melas such as the Brahmaputra Kite festival are conducted in such open spaces. These open spaces are otherwise underutilised and are under the jurisdiction of the city's officials. Since these events are not spatially rooted to their place of manifestation, they do not have any narratives around the place. As such places do not possess any historical links and are otherwise isolated, this type of typology of event spaces was not considered for the purpose of this research.

4.3.4 Precinct based event spaces

In some events, the rituals and other processes are carried out in the premises of monuments or historical precincts. In such cases, the interaction with the city becomes minimal. However, some of these events also manifest in the surrounding urban spaces and precincts such as the Ambubachi Mela, which is an integral aspect of the festival of Ambubachi held within the temple premises of Kamakhya Temple. With the proliferation of devotees from across the country, and the various accommodation camps spread in the surrounding urban areas near the Kamakhya temple complex, this event is significant in terms of socio-cultural and temporal dimension of the urban environment contrasting with the everyday urbanism of the city. The movement of the devotees, various activities performed in the mela, presence of sadhus, performance of rituals, add various layers of meaning to the built fabric. As such, the territory of the event is expanded to interweave a larger area of the urban fabric. Most of the precinct based events are around historical monuments and have been an integral part of the city since the origin of the city. They contain rich narratives around the origin and evolution of the various spaces in the city. Thus, a probe into the spatial manifestation was considered for this research

as a study of such events will provide meaningful insights into the city fabric and understanding place-identity associations of people with the place.

4.4 Spatial characteristics of the urban spaces where the selected cultural events are celebrated

The spatial characteristics of the urban spaces where the selected cultural events are celebrated have been analysed using the 'six dimensions of urban space' (Carmona et al., 2003) to get a holistic understanding of the same. These dimensions are namely visual, morphological, perceptual, social, functional and temporal dimensions. As the perceptual dimension is discussed elaborately in the next chapter, it is not discussed in this section. The discussions in this section are directed towards the temporality of such event spaces.

4.4.1 Spatial characteristics of urban spaces containing celebration of Ambubachi Mela

To get a holistic understanding of the spatial characteristics of the urban spaces where the festival of Ambubachi Mela is celebrated, the six dimensions are elaborated below which analyses its distinct character.

4.4.1.1 Kamakhya Temple precinct

The Kamakhya Temple precinct is the focal point during the Ambubachi Mela celebrations. The dimensions are further elaborated that contribute in imparting the precinct a distinct spatial character. The Temple by visually dominating the spaces weaves the precinct into a cohesive whole.

(i) The visual dimension

The Kamakhya Temple has a towering presence above the Nilachal Hill and visually binds the precinct. Forming the focal point atop the hill surrounded by the landscape of forests, the river and valley below, the temple presents a picturesque image to the area. The road uphill with its twists and turns culminates at the top where the temple is located. There is an element of mystery and anticipation as one makes way to the temple with rows of shops selling various wares adorning the steps leading to the temple. As one reaches the top of the steps, the temple

reveals itself in a sequential manner enhanced by the framing of the adjoining shops and buildings. The shops and related buildings having a similar facade forms a homogeneous background to the distinct spatial characteristics of the temple complex.

(ii) The morphological dimension

The morphological structure (Fig. 4.6) of the precinct is defined by a densely populated and well connected area in four directions. The wide road leading uphill towards the temple complex becomes narrower as one nears the temple imparting a sense of entry and enclosure. The shops on the steps leading to the temple are infused with a profusion of colours as they sell various religious items imparting a sense of distinctiveness. The typologies of these shop structures are such that they form an interactive interface and a cohesive whole.

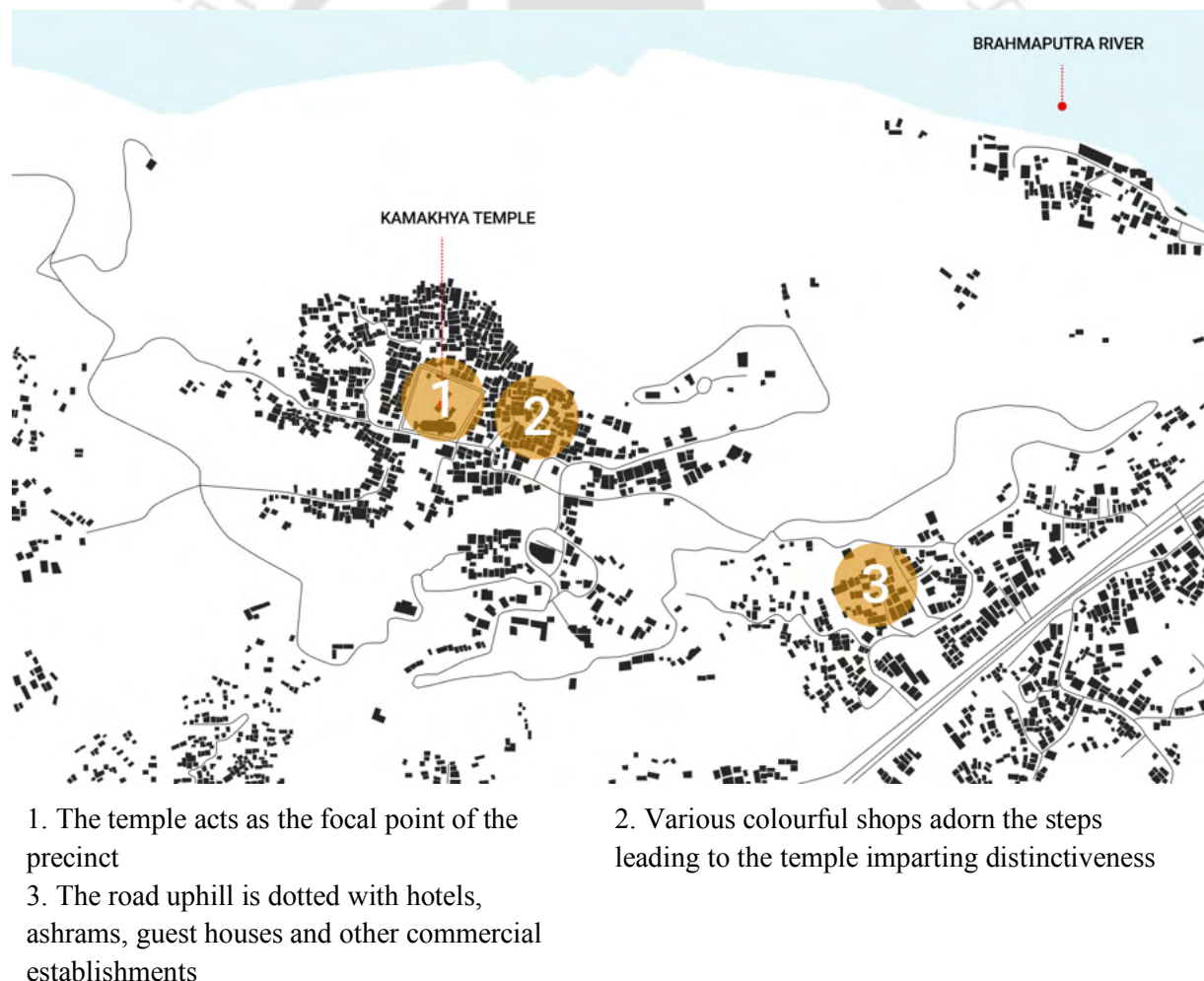


Figure 4.6: The morphological dimension of Kamakhya Temple precinct

(iii) The functional and social dimension

There is an intricate relationship between the formal and informal activities in the precinct (Fig. 4.7). Due to the presence of the temple, there are numerous shops and vendors selling puja items, earthen lamps, incense sticks, food, flowers, and sweets for offering at the temple. Presence of informal shoe stands are observed adjacent to the temple entrance as footwear is not allowed inside the premises. There are numerous other shrines and *pukhuris* (ponds) dotting the hillside near the temple complex. One can also observe dharamshalas, hotels all lined up along the Kamakhya temple road. The formal and informal markets allow people to interact in the transactions of the place. Though the temple is located at the top of the hill, the entrance gateway situated at the start of the Kamakhya road, acts as a pause point and reminds people of the presence of the temple as people pass this area in their daily routines. The entire road has a shaded paved area for pedestrians which allows comfortable movement as one walks the steep uphill. The road next to the temple can also be accessed by foot as it restricts vehicular movement after a point thus giving an immersive experience within the precinct.

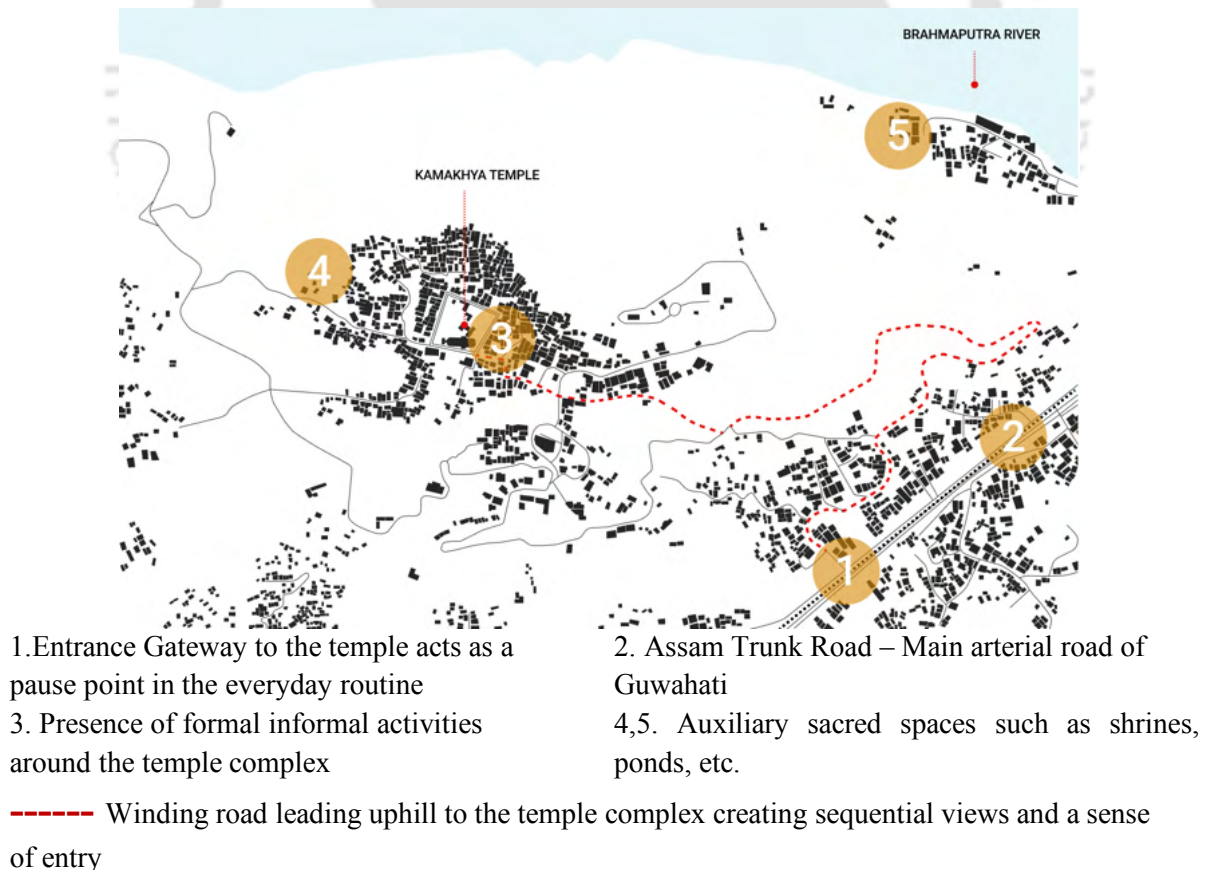


Figure 4.7: The functional and social dimension of Kamakhya Temple precinct

(iv) The temporal dimension

The precinct has a very transient character and provides a freshness of experience every time one visits or passes by it. The changing landscape of the hills with the seasons, or the view of the surging river below adds a sense of temporality to the space. The fluidity of the space accommodating various festivals adds another layer of meaning to these spaces. Ambubachi mela, the most revered annual festival held in the grounds next to the temple transforms these spaces as they adapt to the changing needs of the festive event. Other events such as the *Manasha Puja* and *Durga Puja* held yearly in the temple complex provide various opportunities for social interactions and formation of cohesive bonds. Thus embedded with diverse facets, this precinct forms the spirit of the city with each person having a connect.

The spatial aspects of the Kamakhya Temple precinct are listed in Fig. 4.8.

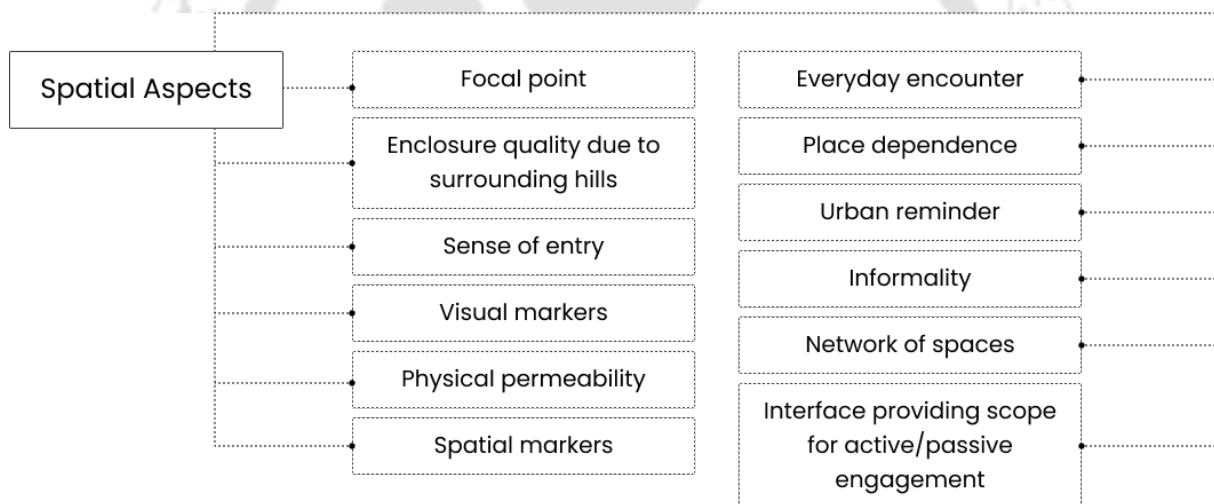


Figure 4.8: Spatial aspects of Kamakhya Temple precinct

4.4.1.2 Sonaram Field precinct

(i) The visual dimension

The Sonaram Field located at the historic core of the city near Bharalumukh is a multipurpose ground that is central to the city's cultural activities. This ground is a large expanse of land cradled by the river on one side while the main arterial road of the city runs on the other. This ground has been a witness to numerous cultural, religious and political events which allows it to visually remain in the consciousness of the people. Hence, there is a high visual permeability

of this space as people encounter it every day in their routine. Visual permeability is also enhanced as the land is flat with no trees or any barrier blocking one's view. The homogeneity of buildings adjacent and opposite to the ground imparts it with a sense of distinctiveness.

(ii) The morphological dimension

Located in the historic core of Guwahati, the Sonaram field ground is a vast open space in an otherwise densely populated area. The historical commercial area of the city is adjacent to the ground, while the Bharalumkh river runs alongside to meet the mouth of the Brahmaputra river. The Assam Trunk road running parallel to the ground meets the M.G. road in a sharp turn at the junction where the grounds' boundary starts. This creates a sense of distinctiveness due to the juxtaposition of the dense economic activities, vehicular and people movement and the vast open space of the grounds. The presence of the Bharalu bridge across the field is another distinct spatial character that creates a sense of orientation. The morphological dimension of the precinct is illustrated in Fig. 4.9 using figure and ground method.

(iii) The functional and social dimension

Located along the Assam Trunk road, which is one of the major arteries of the city, it is impossible to escape passing this precinct, thus making it a place of everyday encounter. Due to the presence of numerous activities along the edges of this open space, this place acts as a point of pause. As the space is both visually and physically permeable, it encourages interaction with the space. Accommodating many activities, this space has become an integral part of the everyday life of the city. This space is used by many to engage in activities such as sports apart from allowing people to relax and passive engagement. The major activities accommodated by this space is however the multitude of cultural, religious, economic and political events that impart this space with a dynamic character. Thus this precinct extends myriad opportunities ranging from the everyday to temporal events rendering this place active and vibrant. The functional and social dimension of the precinct is illustrated in Fig. 4.10 using figure and ground method..

(iv) The temporal dimension

The Sonaram field is now reduced to one fourth of its original size due to encroachment and acquisition for government structures. The field was said to be the courtyard of *dopdar* - the

mediaeval Ahom Barphukan's office. It was later shifted from Panbazar to its present location in 1921 which gave it a fresh lease of life. The present location of the ground in the midst of the highly dense urban area of the city, centrally located and well accessed, acts as the coveted space to accommodate a myriad of activities. The fluidity of the space accommodating all cultural events adds layers of meaning to the spaces. Be it the festival of Bihu or Dandiya, food festivals or trade fairs, mobile theatres and other community events, this space has hosted, in an extravagant way, a wide variety of events, adapting and transforming to the needs of the event. Such activities also provide business opportunities for many. Thus, this space embedded with diverse facets forms the nerve of the city that allows people to connect with the space.



Figure 4.9: The morphological dimension of Sonaram Field precinct



Figure 4.10: The functional and social dimension of Sonaram Field precinct

The spatial aspects of Sonaram Field precinct are listed in Fig. 4.11.

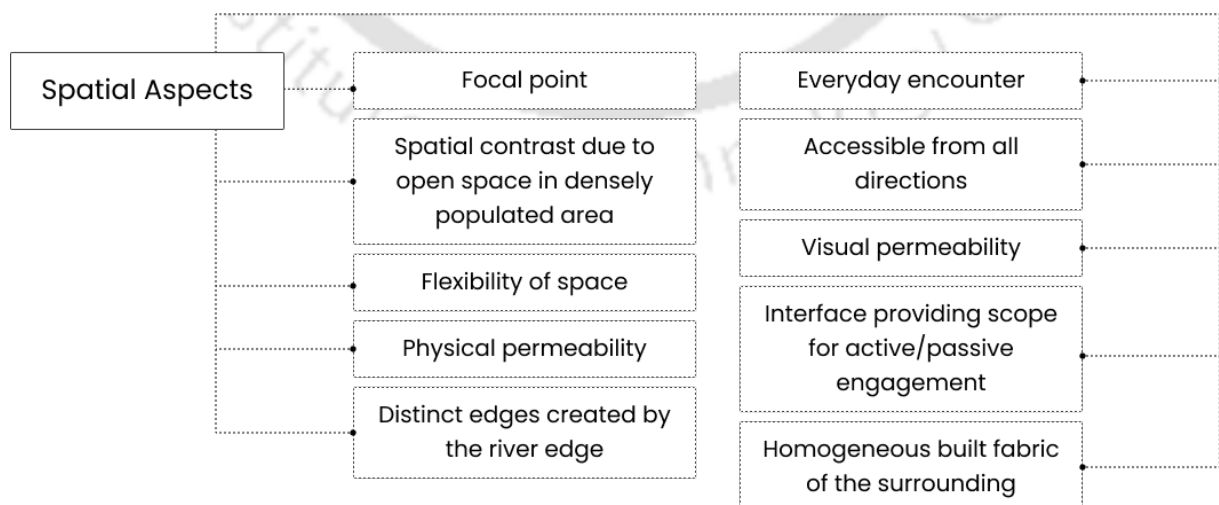


Figure 4.11: Spatial aspects of Sonaram Field precinct

4.4.1.3 Maligaon precinct

(i) The visual dimension

The Maligaon precinct lies in the middle of the city of Guwahati between Kamakhya foothill and Jalukbari point. The main arterial road, Assam Trunk Road connecting the focal points of the city runs through this area. This area is characterised by narrow lanes, with a proliferation of various economic activities and densely populated areas. A visual contrast is perceived as one enters the precinct due to the distinct change in character from the nearby areas. The Kamakhya station is located at the far end of the road that culminates in a dead-end. The presence of the *chariali* (intersection of four streets) and the footbridge over it imparts a sense of distinctiveness and orientation. Repetition of similar building typologies, mostly commercial in nature, imparts a homogeneous facade to the road.

(ii) The morphological dimension

The intersection of the four streets creates a focal point and a sense of orientation. The homogeneous facade of the buildings do not contribute to any distinct character of the precinct when viewed in isolation. However, they form a cohesive whole that is quite distinct from the nearby areas. A wide range of commercial activities, with spill over spaces characterises this area. Thus, physical permeability is reduced at the four streets junction due to various informal activities, vehicular and pedestrian movement alike. The heights of the buildings create a sense of enclosure along the length of the main arterial road of the city running through the precinct. The Kamakhya Railway station is accessed by a series of narrow lanes that culminates at the station. Thus, movement of people and vehicles is high due to the presence of the railway junction leading to reduced physical permeability. The morphological dimension of the precinct is illustrated in Fig. 4.12 using figure and ground method.

(iii) The functional and social dimension

The Maligaon Chariali is a major intersection of the city that connects the major points in the city. The main artery of the city, the Assam Trunk road runs linear through this area, meeting Jalukbari point towards the north. This region had developed during the reign of the British as they set up the Northeast Frontier Railways Headquarters in Maligaon. This led to the development of the Maligaon area as an important corridor linking main Guwahati city to North Guwahati on the other side of the river and the rest of the states of India. Owing to migration

of different groups into the city which resulted in several community centric settlements, Bengali speaking communities predominantly occupied Maligaon, Pandu and the Railway colonies. The market areas and the presence of transportation hubs continue to attract people to this area providing myriad opportunities for people to participate. The functional and social dimension of the precinct is illustrated in Fig. 4.13 using figure and ground method.



1. Intersection of four roads contributing to the sense of orientation
 2. Commercial buildings with a homogenous facade acting as a unit
 3. The railway station is accessed by narrow lanes culminating at the station
- Deformed grid containing the residential areas characterised by low height buildings creating a sense of enclosure

Figure 4.12: The morphological dimension of Maligaon precinct

(iv) The temporal dimension

Over time there has been certain transformations as this area was annexed to the Guwahati municipality during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The setting up of the headquarters of the North East Frontier Railways was a major focal point that not only changed the urban form but also the socio-cultural composition of the area. With increased importance imparted

to this area, proliferation of various economic activities, socio-cultural activities, this region rose into prominence as a major centre in the city. The fluidity of the place accommodating various festivities of the city adds another layer of meaning to these places. One of the major festivals celebrated in various historic areas of this precinct is Durga Puja with celebrations at par with most puja celebrations in Kolkata. The Kamakhya Railway station also becomes the hub for people travelling to Guwahati for the celebration of Ambubachi Mela. With millions of devotees landing on this place, the entire precinct transforms into a sea of people imparting a fair like fervour. The residential camps are set up adjacent to the station and for the next few days the physical and visual imagery of the precinct changes to accommodate diverse needs of the devotees. Thus, embedded with diverse facets, this precinct is an integral part of the city that carries the pulse of the city.



- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Major intersection of important focal points of the city | 2. Presence of various commercial activities and markets |
| 3,5. Various community centric settlements due to migration of different groups | 4. Establishment of Northeast Frontier Railways Headquarters making imparting historical importance to the precinct |
| ----- Main arterial road of the city connecting important focal points of the city from north to the south | |

Figure 4.13: The functional and social dimension of Maligaon precinct

The spatial aspects of the Maligaon precinct are listed in Fig. 4.14.

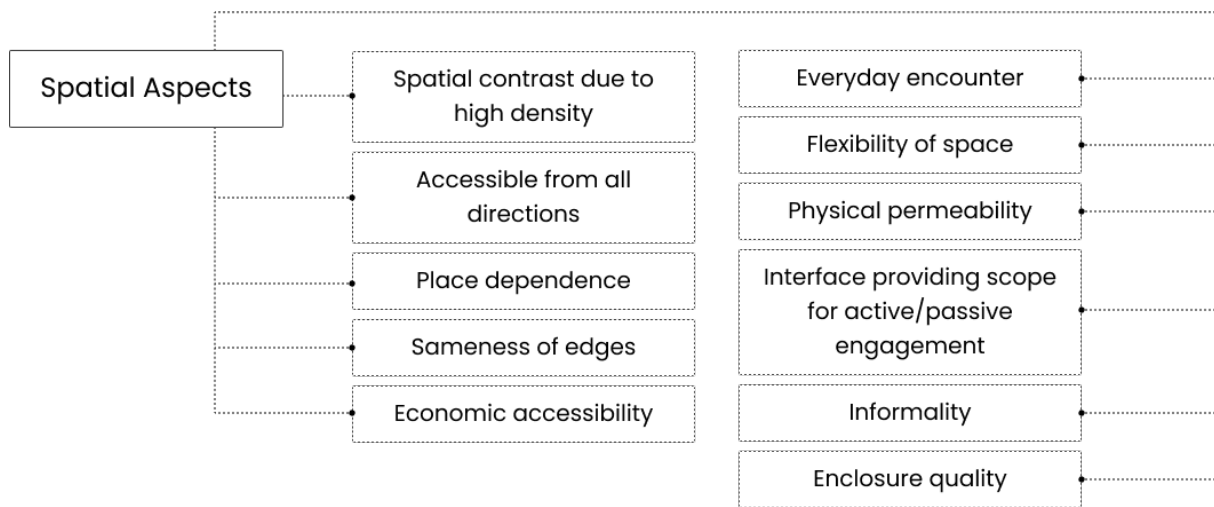


Figure 4.14: Spatial aspects of Maligaon precinct

4.4.1.4 Pandu to Kamakhya Devalaya precinct

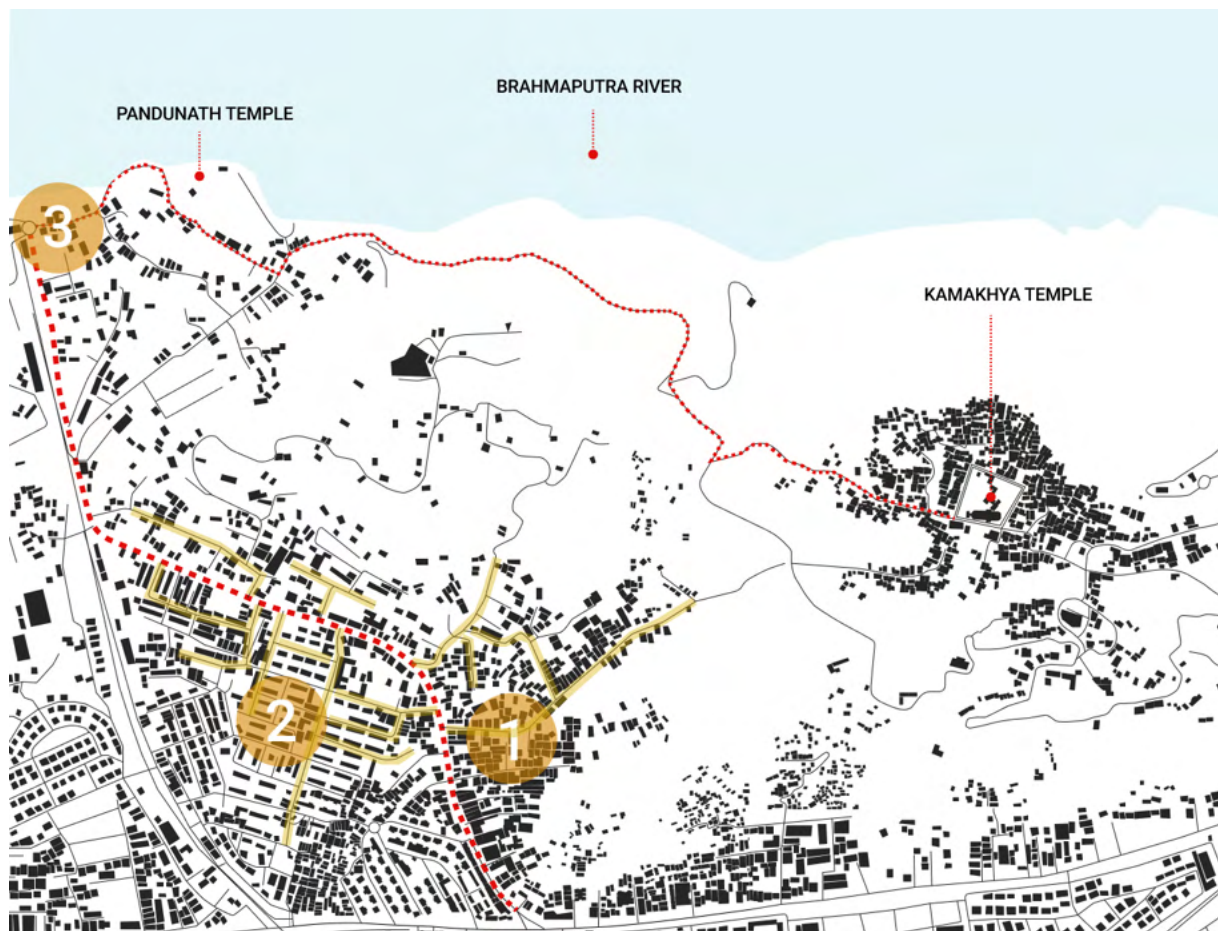
(i) The visual dimension

This stretch is located at the foothill of the Tilla hills and is supposedly named after King Pandu, father of the five Pandavas in Mahabharata. This is a linear stretch that is connected by road with Maligaon Chariali at one end, and the Nilachal hill on the other while also functioning as a river port. The Brahmaputra river flowing to the north of this town creates a vivid visual imagery with the vastness of the river and the view of the iconic Saraighat bridge over it. The experience is further enhanced as one traverses uphill on the new road connecting Pandu port to Bangsi Bagan on the Nilachal hilltop. The presence of the ancient Pandunath temple atop the Tilla hills adds a visual break from the repetition of similar typologies of single-storied structures of the area. Thus, the presence of natural landscape elements adds to the visual characteristic of the place.

(ii) The morphological dimension

There is a singular linear road, known as Pandu Port road, that goes atop the Tilla Hill dotted by residences and many government institutions along the stretch. A deformed grid is formed in this precinct as many narrow lanes converge to meet this stretch of road. The urban blocks thus formed do not have similar size or orientation. There are no prominent road junctions but

pause points in the form of viewpoints that provide a sense of orientation. The Pandu Port is another focal point located at the farthest end of the Pandu Port road. The introduction of the Pandu walking zone has led to physical permeability as well providing pause points while moving along the river edge. The morphological dimension of the precinct is illustrated in Fig. 4.15 using figure and ground method.



1. Residential blocks of various sizes and orientation
3. Pandu Port located at farthest point acts as a focal point and aids in orientation

----- Single linear stretch connecting Maligaon Chariali at one end, and the Nilachal hill on the other

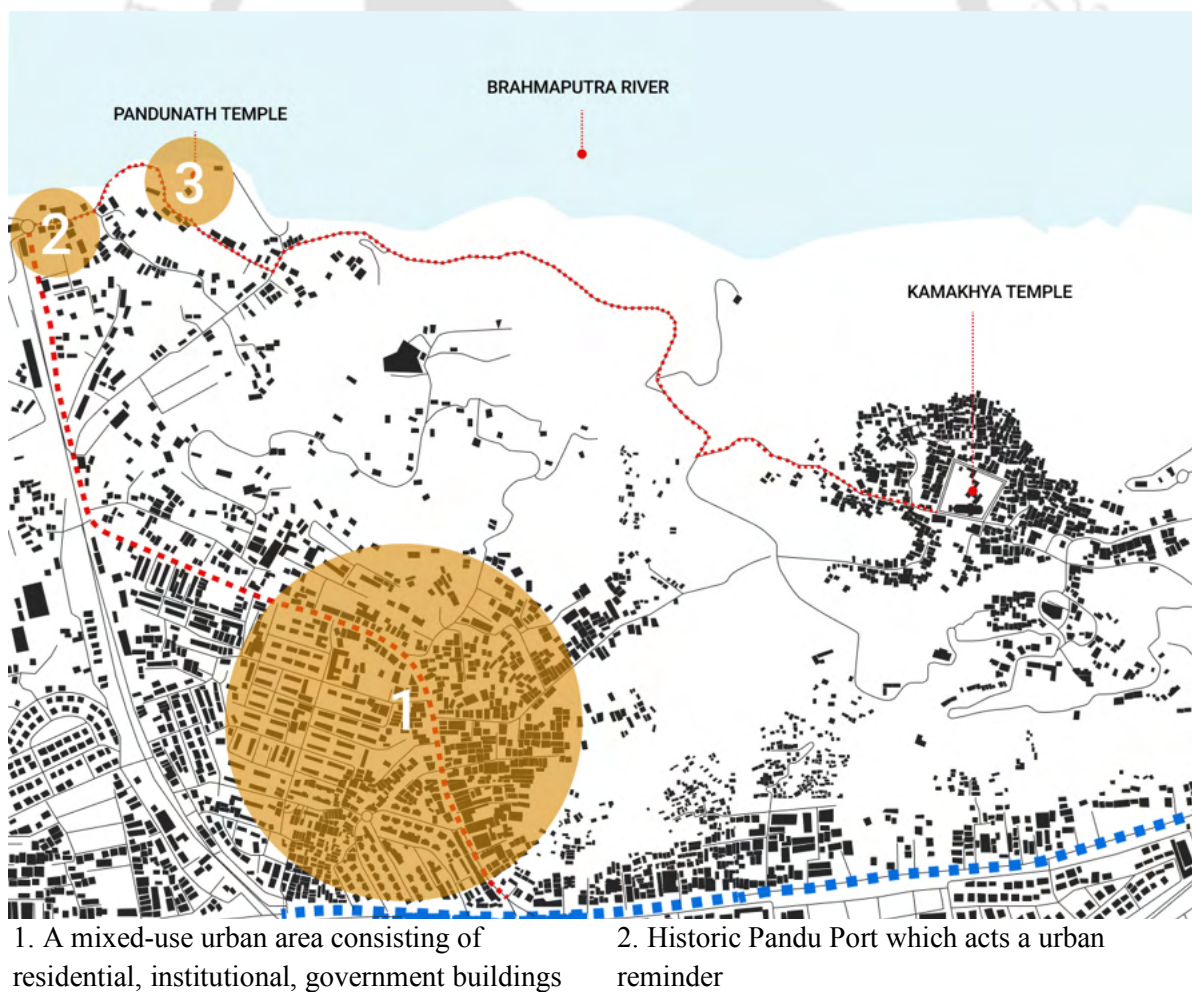
2. Presence of various government institutions imparting a distinctive facade

Deformed grid with narrow lanes with urban blocks of different sizes and orientation

Figure 4.15: The morphological dimension of Pandu-Kamakhya precinct

(iii) The functional and social dimension

The Pandu-Kamakhya Devalaya precinct is primarily a mixed-use area consisting of residential buildings, government institutions, ancient temples and the Pandu river port. The river port was once a core business trade route and part of the National Waterway of India. The construction of the new road connecting the Pandu port to Kamakhya Temple precinct was undertaken keeping in mind the excessive crowd witnessed during Ambubachi Mela leading to increased permeability. The view of the Brahmaputra river along the route offers pause points in the daily routine of the place. The covered route provides the pedestrians shade and resting points. The road from Pandu port also connects spatial elements from legends such as the Mekhela Ujuwa Path which act as urban reminders. Thus, the precinct offers a diverse range of experiences ranging from active and passive engagements, a comfortable environment and scenic views of the landscape. The functional and social dimension of the precinct is illustrated in Fig. 4.16 using figure and ground method.



3. Pandunath Temple is an ancient temple embedded with the narratives of the precinct

----- Winding road uphill connecting Pandu Port to Bangsi Bagan and spatial elements from legends such as the Mekhela Ujuwa Path and acting as pause points

----- Main arterial road of the city

Figure 4.16: The functional and social dimension of Pandu-Kamakhya precinct

(iv) The temporal dimension

The Pandu Port road had served as an important trade route due to the presence of the Pandu port. With transformations over time, the perceived importance of this route has also changed. However, due to the presence of several temples in the precinct, celebrating various festivals add layers of meaning to the space. The festive transitions during the festivals of Durga Puja and Ambubachi transform the precinct from a serene neighbourhood to a bustling, vibrant space. The informal commercial activities during such festivals add to the temporal aspect of the precinct.

The spatial aspects of the Pandu-Kamakhya precinct is listed in Fig. 4.17.

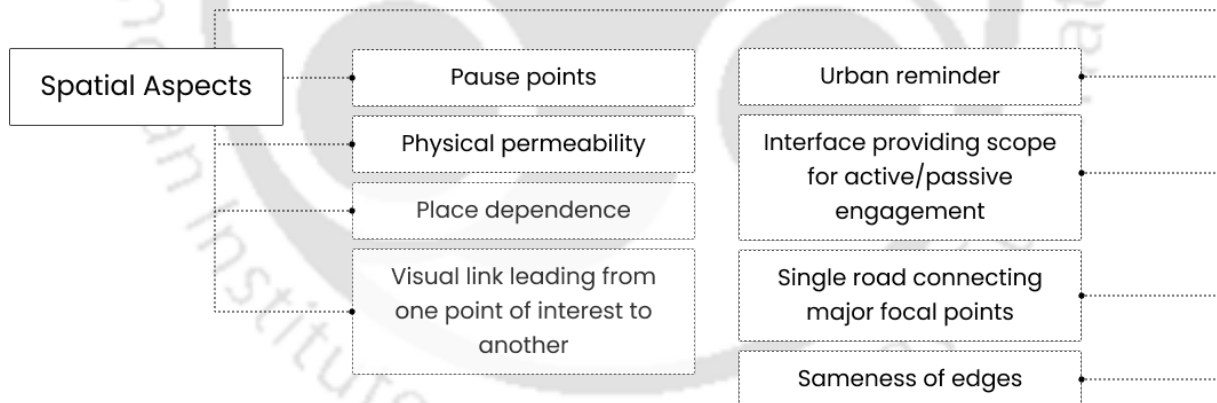


Figure 4.17: Spatial aspects of Pandu-Kamakhya precinct

4.4.2 Spatial characteristics of urban spaces containing celebration of Chhath Puja

The six dimensions for analysing the spatial characteristics of the urban spaces where the festival of Chhath Puja is celebrated are elaborated below.

4.4.2.1 M.G. Road - Panbazar Bharalumukh precinct

(i) The visual dimension

The Brahmaputra river runs parallel along the entire length of the arterial M.G. Road, erstwhile known as the Strand Road in Guwahati connecting Panbazar and Bharalumukh in a linear stretch. The presence of the river provides a sharp spatial contrast and creates defined edges. Repetition of similar building typologies along the edge opposite to the river, creates a sense of homogeneity while the view of the river and the hills at the distance dominates the viewscape of the precinct. There is a distinct spatial contrast perceived due to the myriad types of activities occurring in these spaces. Towards the western part of the linear stretch, containing Bharalumukh, the presence of a park with a statue dedicated to a freedom fighter along with an overbridge creates a sense of orientation. As one moves towards east, the presence of various commercial activities in Machkhowa, Fancy Bazaar and Panbazar, which has remained constant over the years, become an important identification of the place. Though to an outsider, the place may seem like a visual chaos, but the residents have a deep connection to the everyday behaviour of this place. The presence of the Northbrook Gate on the Brahmaputra riverfront at Sukreswar Ghat remains as an urban reminder of the place as it was erected to commemorate the visit of Lord Thomas George Baring Northbrook. This was later known as the Gateway of Assam. The Sukreswar temple and the footbridge next to it serve as focal points. As such, the precinct is marked with a series of focal points, each distinct from the other and having unique character thus acting as urban reminders of the place.

(ii) The morphological dimension

The morphology of this precinct (Fig. 4.18) is defined by the Brahmaputra river along the entire stretch of the M.G. Road which is the main arterial road connecting most of the older core containing administrative and commercial areas of Guwahati such as Panbazar, Digholi Pukhuri, Fancy Bazaar, Bharalumukh, Machkhowa and Uzan Bazaar. The presence of buildings on the edge of the road in Fancy Bazar have defined the street quality. The homogeneous character of these urban blocks imparts a unified character to the edge. As narrow lanes converge towards the M.G. road, it creates a grid of parallel roads with intersecting lanes connecting the internal areas to the main arterial road. Towards Panbazar, there are many colonial buildings that stand out due to their architectural features and act as urban reminders. The road junctions marked with important landmarks such as the statue of

Veer Lachit Borphukan, Sukreswar Temple, Footbridge near Sukreswar temple, the Gateway of Assam, serve the purpose of orientation. The presence of various informal activities on the road attribute a sense of vibrancy to the place. Being one of the most important roads in the city, the entire precinct is highly permeable both visually and physically.

(iii) The functional and social dimension

The stretch of road from Panbazar to Bharalumukh is one of the most important and historic cores of the city. Thus, the functions supported by this precinct are many and their importance in the everyday life of the city is high. With educational institutions, government buildings, cultural centres, parks, markets and temples, this precinct has a very diverse use and attracts people from all walks of life. Being an arterial road of the city, this precinct is an integral part of the movement system of the city due to which the varied functions thrive. The presence of shops and other commercial activities along the road, with their interactive interfaces, add to the vitality of the street. The west end of the road connects to the other main arterial road known as the Assam Trunk Road. This area is characterised by the presence of parks and open spaces. The Machkhowa Idgah field is a prominent landmark which offers multiple activities from organising Eid prayers apart from formal and informal cricket coaching and regular sporting recreational activities besides social meetings for local residents. The numerous ferry ghats along the banks of the river functions as an important link to the northern part of the city. With the recent introduction of the ropeway, connecting the Panbazar ghat to Dolgobindo ghat, the importance of this precinct is further enhanced. Thus, the precinct, by offering scope for active and passive engagements, formal and informal interactions, recreational and commercial choices, keep the place safe and vibrant. People frequent this area for all kinds of necessary and optional activities and due to the public nature of this precinct, catering to all classes of people, makes it accessible to all. The functional and social dimension of the precinct is illustrated in Fig. 4.19 using figure and ground method.



Figure 4.18: The morphological dimension of Panbazar Bharalumukh precinct

(iv) The temporal dimension

This precinct, currently housing commercial, institutional, governmental and recreational uses is resilient to change in terms of retaining the essence of the place. However, over time, the erstwhile Strand road had changed its name to M.G. Road and roads once shaded by trees on either side have changed their physical character with the proliferation of various commercial buildings in their place. The celebration of a variety of festivals on the ghats of the Brahmaputra in this precinct has added layers of meaning to these places. The presence of the Sukreswar temple, the Idgah mosque, Gurudwara and Church have created a sense of diversity in the place. Over time, these areas have been given various names which echoed the current sentiments of the times. The robustness and flexibility of the place have been able to stretch and accommodate these diversities and changes to cater to the needs of its diverse users. This

precinct has remained the central nerve of the city over many generations from which the city has grown radially over the years.

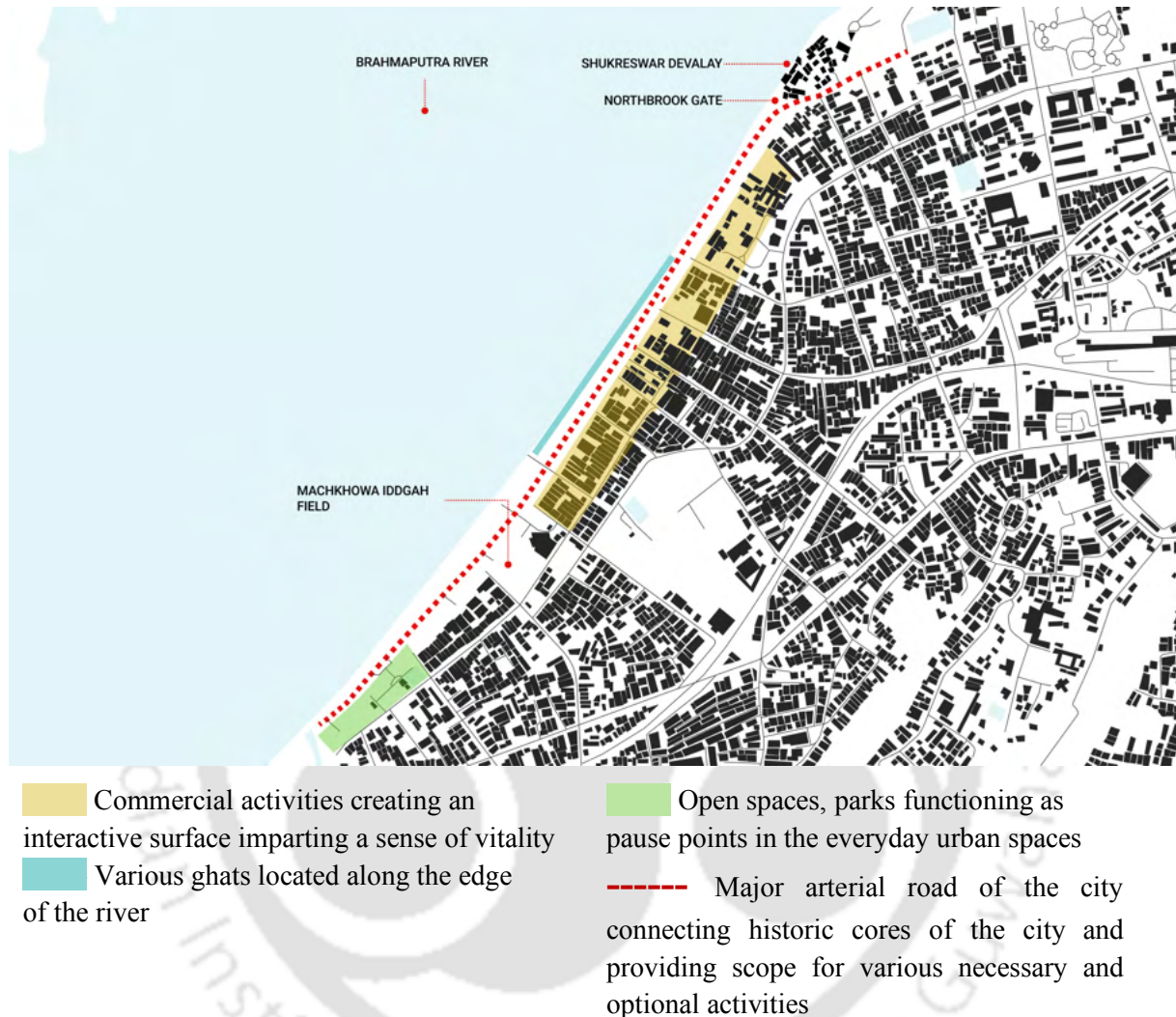


Figure 4.19: The functional and social dimension of Panbazar Bharalumukh precinct

The spatial aspects of the Panbazar Bharalumukh precinct are listed in Fig. 4.20.

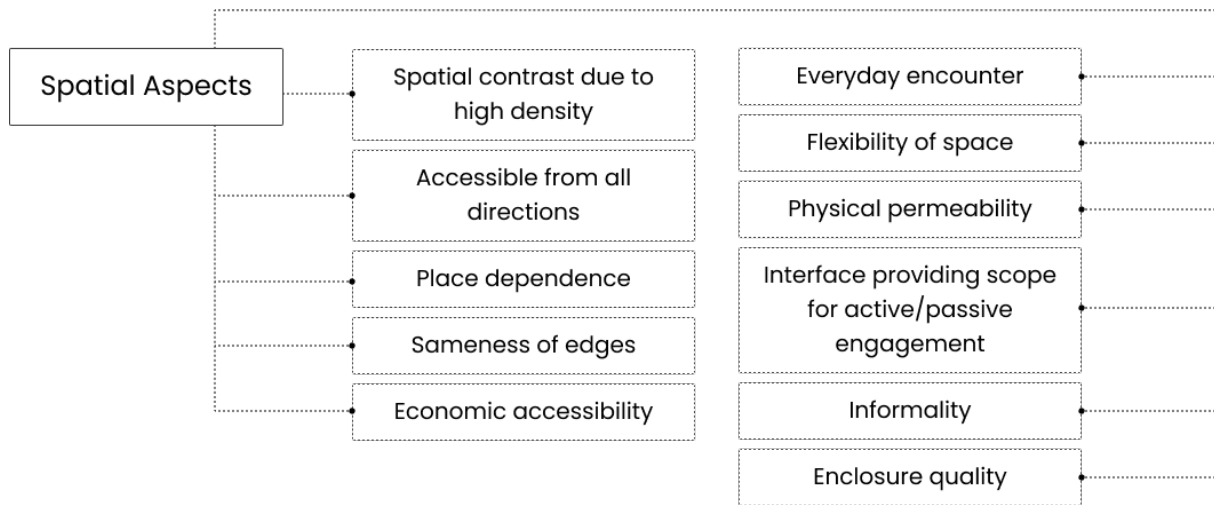


Figure 4.20: Spatial aspects of Panbazar Bharalumukh precinct

4.4.2.2 M.G. Road - Uzan Bazar precinct

A market named Chowk Bazar flanked Latasil field during the early British period. This market later moved towards *uzan* or upstream of the Brahmaputra, which gave the name Uzan Bazar to this area. Some others argue that the place got its name due its location near the Naojan canal which used to witness *masor uzan* or massive upstream movement of fish lending the locality its name. Another theory is that people from upper Assam or *Ujoni* settled in this region thereby giving the region its name.

(i) The visual dimension

As one moves further east towards Uzan Bazaar, the cacophony of activities in the adjacent commercial areas slows, replaced by quiet residential neighbourhoods and parks. There is a visual contrast as one enters this area due to the abundance of large foliage trees all along. The river Brahmaputra running along the edge of the road and the view of the hills on the other bank of the river, dominates the viewscape. The linearity of the road allows visual and physical permeability. This area is part of the earliest settlements in the city and contains many landmarks and focal points. The iconic Uzan Bazaar Fish market, Kachaari Bazaar are some of the oldest market areas of the city that are still functional. These areas along with the

historical landmarks continually remind people of the city's history and facilitate connection with the place.

(ii) The morphological dimension

The precinct comprises a linear road with the river running along its edge, flanked by low heighted residential blocks, guesthouses, cafes, shops, markets and parks. This stretch of road, earlier known as the Upper Strand Road, is a part of the M.G. Road, a major arterial road of the city. The densely populated residential blocks do not have a uniform structure with settlements growing organically resulting in weak visual permeability. Within this organic pattern, the building blocks define the street in most cases in the narrow lanes behind the main street facade. The entire street has high physical permeability due to the network of streets and a comfortable enclosure quality. The edge adjacent to the river is characterised by the presence of open spaces in the form of parks and the river bank. There is high visual and physical permeability on this edge adjacent to the river as a result of the presence of open spaces. Market places and *haats* functioning since many years forms one end of the road while the Planetarium and Latasil Field located adjacent to the marketplace serves the purpose of orientation. The morphological dimension of Uzan Bazar precinct is illustrated in Fig. 4.21 using figure and ground method.

(iii) The functional and social dimension

The Uzan Bazar area is one of the oldest settlements of Guwahati city comprising numerous focal points of historical importance such as the Latasil Field, Guwahati Planetarium, Uzan Bazar fish market, and residences belonging to early residents of Guwahati. Due to a variety of activities located along the edges of the M.G. road, this place acts as a point of pause. All the open spaces being visually and physically permeable are thronged by people for various activities. Away from the hustle bustle of the city, the Uzan Bazar precinct is a serene neighbourhood. Latasil field located in this area is one of the important landmarks of the city. This open ground served many purposes from hosting social, cultural, political and literary events apart from religious and cultural functions. Located at a central junction, this open space provides a point of pause in the everyday activities of the city. The vegetable and fish market here is one of the oldest markets of the city which witnesses people travelling from nearby villages to sell their wares. Apart from the market, the presence of cultural centres, parks, planetarium, cafes, shops attracts people to this place for diverse activities adding to the vibrancy of the place. The abundance of trees in this area provides shade to the pedestrians and the intermittent

informal activities promote local transactions. Thus, the precinct provides scope for a variety of activities for a diverse range of people allowing both active and passive engagements, leisure and recreational choices, necessary and optional choices, imparting it a dynamic character. The functional and social dimension of Uzan Bazar precinct is illustrated in Fig. 4.22 using figure and ground method.

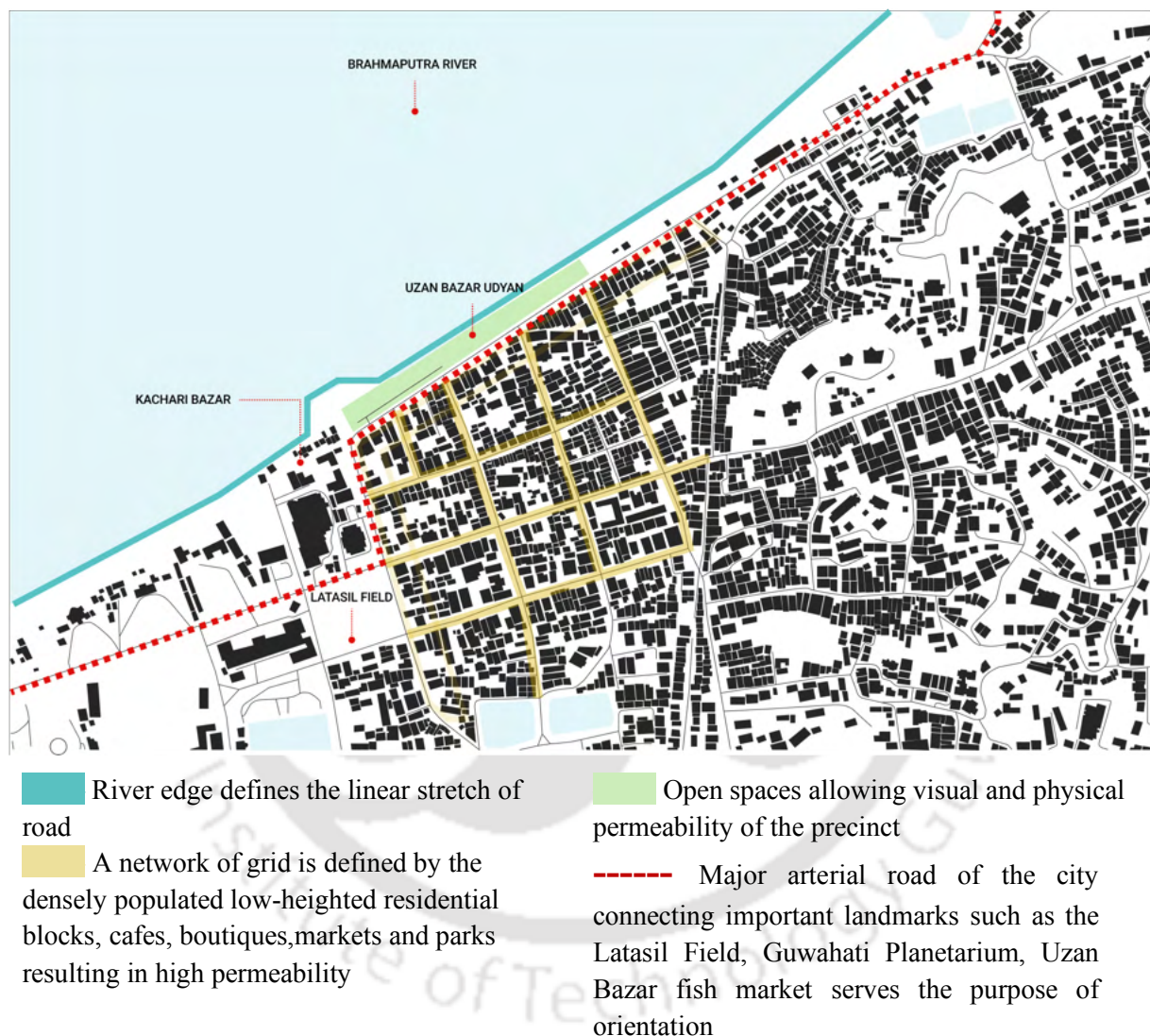


Figure 4.21: The morphological dimension of Uzan Bazar precinct

(iv) *The temporal dimension*

The topography of the place has defined the transformations of the precinct by restricting large scale urban growth and has played a key role in retaining the essence of the place. Many activities performed in this precinct have evolved over time adding a wealth of meaning to their

places of manifestation. This precinct organised the first public Durga Puja celebration in Assam apart from being the birthplace of Bihutoli, the modern avatar of Bihu celebration from rural settings to urban stage. The celebration of Chhath Puja is also an emerging cultural dimension celebrated on the ghats of this precinct. Apart from cultural and religious events, sports events are a regular occurrence in the Latasil playground. Thus, both the daily activities of the place as well as the temporal outbursts during festive events have retained their essence and have contributed to the cultural continuity of the place.

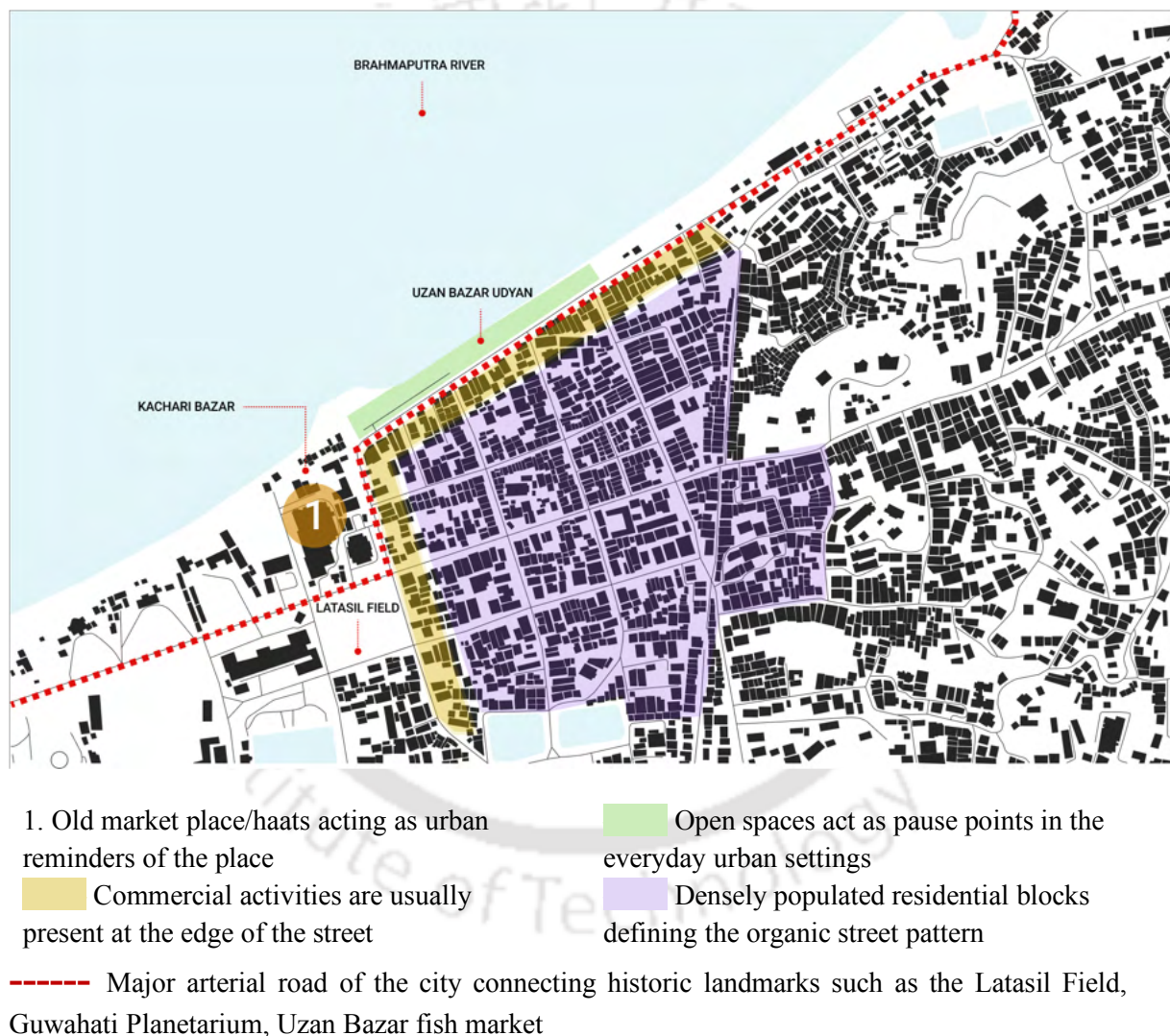


Figure 4.22: The functional and social dimension of Uzan Bazar precinct

The spatial aspects of the Uzan Bazar precinct are listed in Fig. 4.23.

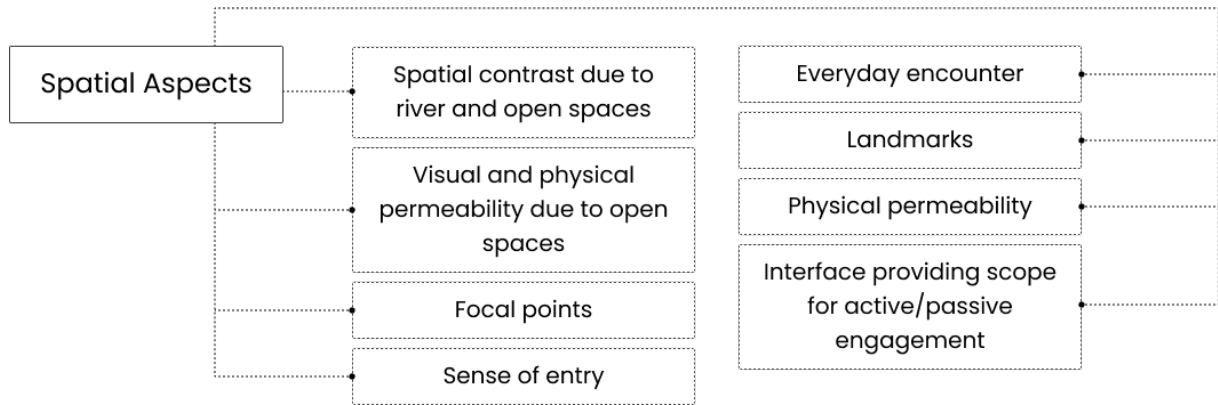


Figure 4.23: Spatial aspects of Uzan Bazar precinct

4.4.3 Comparative analysis of the six precincts

Comparing the spatial aspects of six precincts, a comprehensive list of spatial characteristics have been formulated. For instance, the expanse of the hill on which the site of Ambubachi Mela is situated, with the view of the river below, or the banks of the river Brahmaputra as the site for Chhath Puja running parallel to the historic core of the city, each indicate a spatial contrast with the surrounding physical fabric. Thus, this ‘spatial contrast’ by imparting distinctiveness to the space, due to the spatial characteristics, renders the precinct memorable and legible. Similarly, ‘permeability’ was another aspect that was observed both visually and physically which strengthened people-place associations due to formal and informal interactions with the place. In each of the precincts, there are elements replete with either historical past of the city or memorable narratives related to such event spaces denoted as ‘urban reminders’. Having distinct physical edges, these cultural event spaces create a microclimate which is distinct from the homogeneity of the surrounding urban fabric. In both the cases, the sensory aspects played a very significant role in how the environment was perceived. Be it the visual quality in the case of Nilachal Hill and the river Brahmaputra along the M.G. Road, tactility as in the case of the ghats of the river, the auditory sense imparted by the cacophony of noises due to the multitude of activities in the Fancy Bazar precinct, olfactory sense in the fish market in Uzan Bazar, gustatory senses in the Nilachal precinct; the sensory aspects play a significant role in the identification. Focal points, landmarks, urban reminders impart a sense of orientation to the precinct. The natural features such as the Nilachal hill on

which the festival of Ambubachi is celebrated or the Brahmaputra river bank which transforms as the site for Chhath Puja, enhance the sense of orientation. The interface between the built and the temporary spaces encourages many active and passive interactions. The informal interactions in space increases the sociability of the place which are facilitated by pedestrian movement, presence of informal vendor activities and spillover spaces. The symbolic significance of the site of these event spaces increases the place dependence bringing diverse crowds to engage in such cultural events. Thus, such spaces also allow accessibility due to their flexible characteristics. Acting as pause points in the everyday routine of the residents, the juxtaposition of necessary and optional activities increases the sense of vitality of the place making them more vibrant. These aspects thus contribute towards enhancing the sense of Place Identity.

These diverse spatial aspects are categorised into fifteen generic spatial aspects playing a significant role in enhancing the participants' construct of Place Identity in cultural event spaces. Each of these aspects contribute towards enhancing the quality of the event spaces, adding more meaning and enhancing Place Identity of such spaces. These aspects are further compared with spatial aspects of event-space relationship to assess their significance.

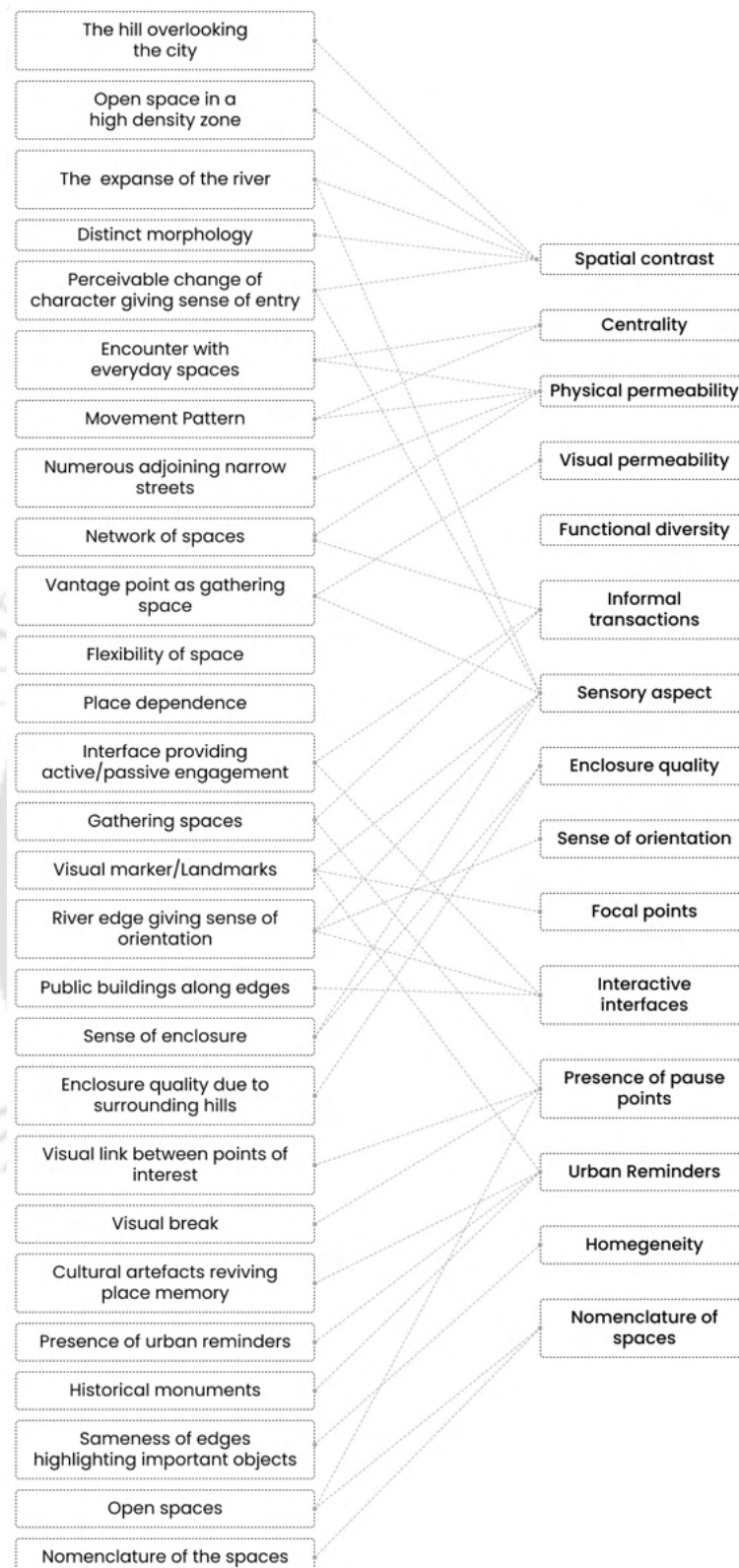


Figure 4.24: Process of listing spatial aspects of urban spaces of selected cultural event spaces

4.5 Spatial aspects enhancing the festive experience

Cultural events though temporal in nature, are based in the everyday settings and impart meaning to the built environment. Phenomenological tools such as photographs, video clippings, discussion with participants and unobstructed observations were applied for documentation of the two cultural events under study. For both these case studies, the nine parameters for evaluating the event space relationship sieved through literature review has been utilised to analyse the festive experience.

4.5.1 The festive experience of Ambubachi Mela

The festive experience of Ambubachi Mela is rooted in the everyday spatial settings of the city. As such this festival adds meaning to the spatial elements of the place. The festive event of Ambubachi Mela is a weeklong festival held around the middle of June in the Kamakhya Temple Complex of Guwahati. Every year during the Assamese month of Aahara (middle of June) the hills of Nilachal on which the Kamakhya temple stands, transform into a sea of humanity as thousands of devotees cutting across geographical spectrum of India throng the abode of mother Goddess Kamakhya to celebrate her annual menstrual cycle. For close to a fortnight, the hills teem with people from different hues, seeking salvation in the creative and nurturing power of mother Earth beautifully symbolised by nature's fury witnessed during this period of monsoons. This festival also witnesses the celebration of Ambubachi Mela, just outside the temple complex for almost a week. During the Ambubachi Mela in Guwahati, the doors of the Kamakhya Temple remain closed for the entire duration of three days as it is believed that the Mother Earth becomes unclean for those days. During this time any kind of farming work is not taken on. Daily worship and other religious performances are also stopped during the Ambubachi Mela of Guwahati in Assam. After the completion of three days, the doors of the Kamakhya Temple are reopened. But the doors of the temple are reopened only after Devi Kamakhya is bathed and the other rituals are executed. It is then believed that Mother Earth has retrieved her purity. This is purely a ritual of the Tantric cult. On the fourth day, the devotees of the Goddess are allowed to enter the temple for worshipping Devi Kamakhya. The Prasad is distributed on the fourth day in two forms- Angodak and Angabastra. Angodak literally means the fluid part of the body whereas Angabastra means the cloth covering the body. Being a unique gathering of a multitude of people, the mega event of Ambubachi Mela has turned out to be one of the major events in the eastern part of India. This festival has been

heralded as the biggest festival in Eastern India and has seen a surge in popularity over the last few years. Being a unique gathering of a multitude of people, the mega event of Ambubachi Mela has turned out to be one of the major events in the eastern part of India. This annual Ambubachi Mela is also known as ‘Mahakumbh of the East’ which draws lakhs of devotees – tourists, sadhus and tantrics – from all over the world. The shared experience of so many people in celebrating this festival creates collective memories for the participants. The memory of this event celebrated annually in the Nilachal hill of Guwahati since ages has significantly contributed to forming a distinct identity of both the city and the site of the festival. Thus this event by its temporal manifestation imparts a permanent image to the city. The spatial aspects of Ambubachi are further elaborated due to which the event becomes an indispensable element in the minds of the people experiencing it.

To engage in a conversation with the participants of the festival, four guiding questions were used as described in the third Chapter of the report. The intent was to interpret the role of spatial setting in enhancing the festive experience of the event. The interviews were conducted at various locations of the event and with a diverse spectrum of interviewees consisting of devotees, tantrics, ascetics and stakeholders. An example of how the interview was conducted, transcribed and spatial aspects interpreted is provided in this section (Table. 4.3). Thirteen such interviews conducted during the festive event at various locations of the festive event aided in understanding the event space relationships which have been elaborated under the nine aspects as formulated through literature.

4.5.1.1 A sense of ‘territory’

During the celebration of the festive event of Ambubachi Mela, the event space on top of the Nilachal hill and the auxiliary spaces around the event, has the ability to create a spatial limit and a sense of separation within the physical fabric of the city. Having defined edges, Ambubachi can be separated in space or time from the common terrain. The road leading up to the Kamakhya Temple has an entrance gate which clearly demarcates and designates it from the urban fabric of the city. It creates a territory which allows people to separate themselves emotionally from everyday life and give themselves over to the festival.



Figure 4.25: Sense of territory created during the Ambubachi Mela by visual and spatial demarcation in the spatial settings.

The intensity of the festive mood is perceivable within the spatial limits of the festival and decreases as one moves further away. The location of the various accommodation camps across the city also helps in accentuating the perception of the event. The billboards with messages around the event and welcome gateways put up at strategic locations in the city add to the demarcation of the event in the city and enhance the sense of territory (Fig. 4.25). As one moves away from the location of the event space, the sense of territory weakens as these spaces merge with the surrounding fabric of the city due to loss in the enclosure quality (Fig. 4.26).

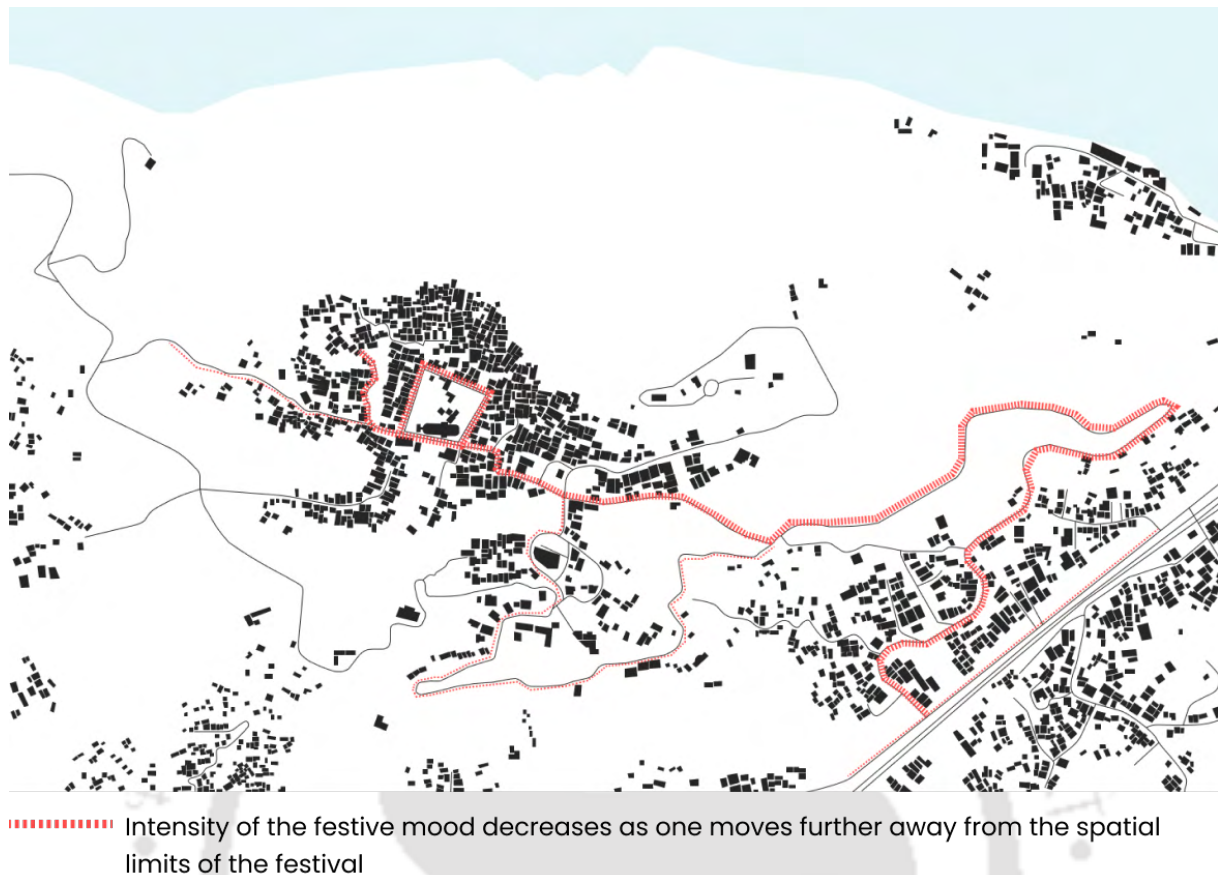


Figure 4.26: Sense of territory created during Ambubachi Mela

4.5.1.2 A sense of 'intimacy'

The event space aids in the sense of intimacy by forming social relations during the festivities of Ambubachi Mela. By providing a sense of enclosure and limit to the event as people and activity are compressed together during the mela, these event spaces can facilitate intimacy. More generally, the presence of the crowd in a spatial setting that encouraged people to share similar experiences enhanced their sense of intimacy. People were observed narrating their experiences around a sense of *communitas* shared with others. Millions of people experience the same spatial setting experience, retelling narratives around the festival, and collective memories during the event as a result of the intimate environment of the event space. Both the spectators and performers share the same space thus facilitating intimacy by allowing people to see and be seen. Being involved in rituals, formal and informal activities further enhance the sense of intimacy due to shared experience. The sense of intimacy is also fostered in the auxiliary spaces such as accommodation camps for the visiting participants where many interactions are fostered. Staying in a camp with approximately hundred other people, one

respondent comments on the sense of intimacy akin to a family. For many, this feeling of ‘family’ formed in the Mela is an important part of their experience and their motivation to attend. Thus, intimacy is facilitated by the permeable spaces such as the camps, focus directed towards the temple, participation in shared activities and shared experience of the festive environment (Fig. 4.27).



1. Shared participation



2. Passive participation

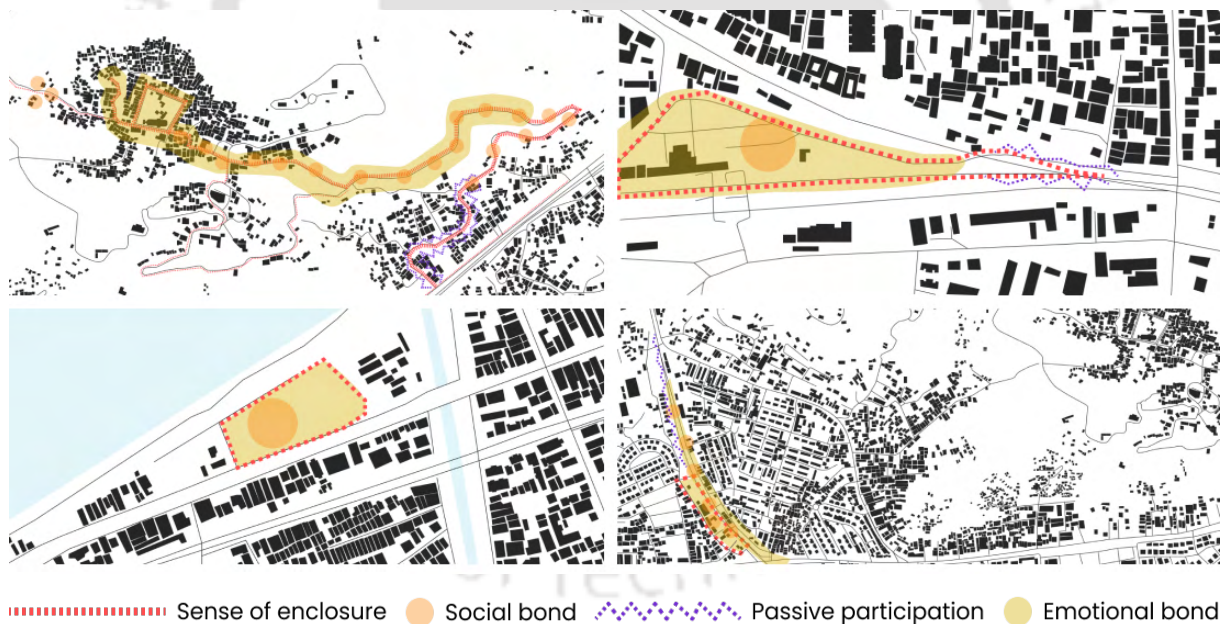


Figure 4.27: Sense of intimacy created during Ambubachi Mela

4.5.1.3 The sense of ‘sensuality’

The event of Ambubachi Mela engages all the sensorial aspects of the participants: the feel of movement through space, warmth, or cold; the sound of music; the smell of burning wood,

essence and flowers; the taste of food; the sight of costumes and colour, blended by the imagination into an unusual experience (Fig. 4.28). Ambubachi is celebrated atop the Nilachal hill, surrounded by lush green hills and a view of the Brahmaputra. During the festival, devotees mentioned that they are drawn by the natural beauty of the site apart from the spiritual essence of the festival. The presence of such sensory stimulations thus derived increases the pleasurability of the festival, thus becoming a factor for repeated visits. Apart from the devotees, there are many participants who throng the festival in their costumes representing Hindu Gods and perform a variety of activities that keep everyone enthralled. This increases the attractiveness of the festival and manifests in the sense of shared experiences. Amidst the sound of conch shells, or the beating of drums, the senses are engaged at the event site. The various rituals performed by the tantrics and other ascetics are sometimes accompanied by feats of display of their other-worldly physical strength, are common occurrences at the Ambubachi Mela. During Ambubachi Mela, the visual setting of the festival transports one to a surreal experience. There is a profusion of red and orange which is visible in the costumes of the tantrics and devotees alike. Red is a very important colour for the devotees of Goddess Kamakhya and represents Shaktism and creativity. As emotions are heightened, these urban spaces gain special importance as sites for collective memory and attachment.



Figure 4.28: Sense of sensuality created during Ambubachi Mela

4.5.1.4 The 'scale' of the event

Festivals such as Ambubachi Mela are mega events with thousands of participants. Hence, in order to conceive such festivals in the urban setting of a city is a daunting task. During Ambubachi Mela, more than 15 lakh devotees had participated. Thus, the entire city becomes a stage for the festival as different locations of the city are weaved together to accommodate various activities and requirements of the festival (Fig. 4.29). However, this festival has also swallowed large pieces of the surrounding neighbourhood as the auxiliary festival spaces are located in the periphery of the festival site. All these auxiliary locations are connected radially to the festival site increasing physical and visual permeability of the event. The throng of devotees walking towards the site of the Mela from the various locations of the event also gives the perception of the mega scale of the event. With a growing number of devotees every year, there is a fine line of balance between the size of the event and the event space that needs to be considered. When events get too large for their place, the parameters of intimacy, granularity and triangulation can be lost. While it is advised not to change the physical scale and setting when attendance grows as it can dramatically change an event and destroy its very essence.

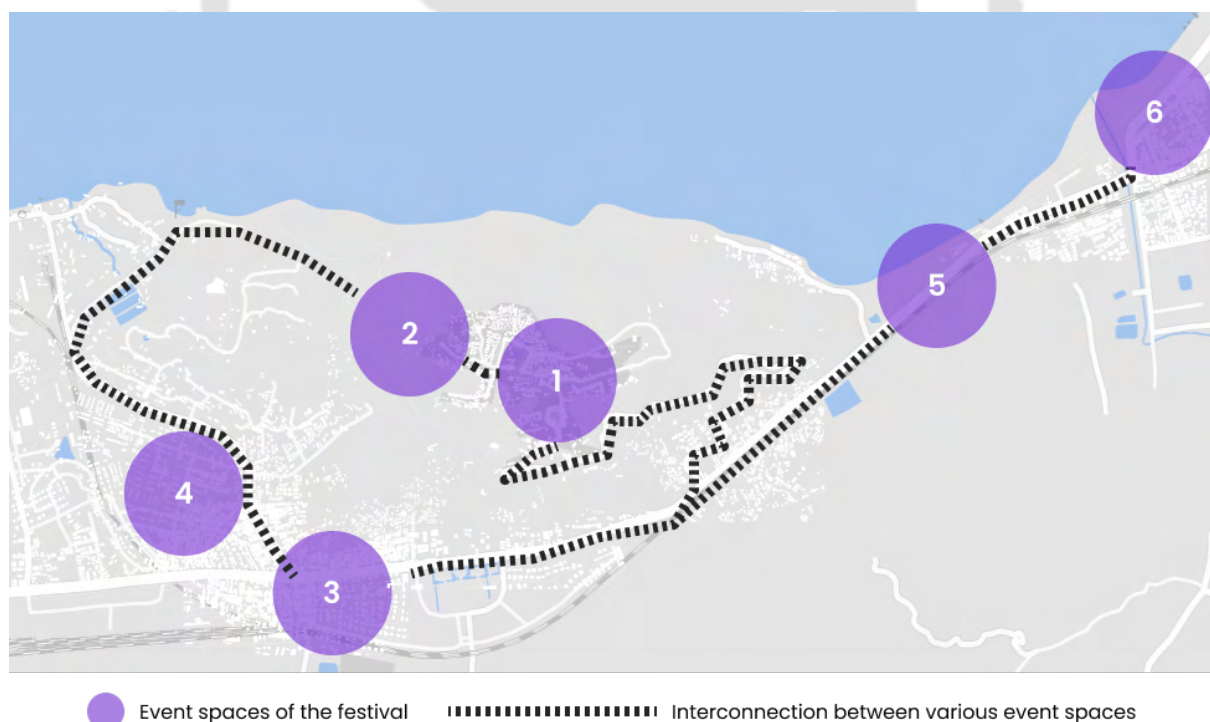


Figure 4.29: Scale of the event spaces of Ambubachi Mela

4.5.1.5 Granularity

Accommodating multiple nodes of activity, the festival of Ambubachi caters to diverse groups which can be experienced at various levels. People can choose to be actively or passively engaged with the festivities. The flexibility of the spaces allow the performance of different activities which animates the spaces and hence accommodates diverse experience in the same spatial context. For instance, the road leading upto the Kamakhya temple is interspersed with various pockets of activity zones like food stalls, hawkers selling various trinkets allowing people to engage in conspicuous consumption. The various zones are marked out by the Mela committee for the different types of activities which helps the participants to orient themselves in the event space. These include the camps which provide the space for the participants to interact with fellow devotees and engage in shared activities. In one instance, a group of travelling *Baul* singers or singing minstrels of West Bengal performed in one of the camps, engaging other participants who listened raptly. Some participants also joined in to sing along. Such passive and active engagements could be observed throughout the festival. The major highlight of the event with the highest nodes of activities was the historic *Mela* held near the temple precinct. Even though the doors of the sanctum remain closed to allow the deity to rest and *darshan* is prohibited during Ambubachi, the temple complex is thronged by millions of devotees. The black clad Aghoras, Tantriks, Sadhus and Sadhvis with long matted hair etc perform their various tantric rituals in and around the temple complex which provides another point of interest to people. Apart from the devotees, there are many participants who throng the festival in their costumes representing Hindu Gods and perform a variety of activities that keep everyone enthralled. Thus the narratives of the festival are played out conveying the culture of the festival and enhances the sense of shared experiences. These myriad experiences facilitated by the spatial aspects listed in Fig. 30 present a vivid and memorable image of the event because of its flexible and inclusive nature.

4.5.1.6 Triangulation

The festival of Ambubachi being dynamic and multifaceted in nature provides multiple scope for interactions and connection with others. There was a sense of familiarity and solidarity as participants shared various locations in the Mela which was not just restricted to the residential camps. As participants walk uphill to the site of the festival, multiple focal points along the way encourage various levels of interaction. Interaction or a sense of community between two

strangers in a public space is encouraged by a third activity or object they can both share. During Ambubachi, the culminating point is the temple which is the spiritual focus of the devotees. Ambubachi also provides pause points for the participants through cultural programs such as *Katha Vashak* held in specific locations in the city. Participants ranked highly those places that allowed them moments of connection with self and others, for experiences associated with the festival places facilitated the interaction with oneself and others. The public performances by the traditional drummers, or the tantric rituals observed by the tantrics in various locations of the event space binds the performers and the spectators together in a sense of triangulation.

4.5.1.7 Narrative

The narrative of the Ambubachi Mela festival since at least the eight century is rooted in tantric traditions and combines several key themes of blood, sacrifice and power and revolves around the goddess Kamakhya. There are several legends that find mention in the Puranas and Brahmanas, though the overriding narration is the one around the sacrifice of Sati, lord Shiva's wife and his intense fury that led to Sati's dismemberment into 51 parts and the subsequent origin of the Kamakhya Temple where her 'Yoni' fell. The explanation given by the Kalika Purana states that the worship of Kamakhya started with the occupation of the Nilachal Hill, where Goddess Kamakhya resided, by Narakasura. The Kalika Purana mentions the legend of unrequited love Narakasura had towards Goddess Kamkhya. The Goddess relented to Narakasura's repeated approaches for marriage on the condition that a temple be erected in her honour on Nilachal Hill, while excavating a tank over the hill and the construction of four roads leading from the plain to the hill, all in the course of a night. When the demon, Narkasura had almost accomplished the task, the Goddess caused a cock to crow before dawn proclaiming that the night had passed and hence the demon had failed in his task. Whereas noted historian R.M. Nath, gives an explanation to this effect that presence of Red Lacemetite caused the reddish tinge of water flowing out from a natural spring during monsoons which represented the menstrual cycle of the Goddess. At the point where the water oozed out from the rock, there was a natural fissure conical in shape and reddish pink in colour resembling a female genital organ. This further strengthened the belief that Mother Earth menstruated through this fissure at the peak time of cultivation. The place was therefore called Ka-ma-kha, which later on was renamed as Kamakhya by the Hindus. The Kalika Purana gives an etymology of the name of

Kamakhya as the combination of two words *kama* and *akhya*, meaning whose epithet is *kama* (Choudhury, 1985). The narratives to the origin of the worship of Kamakhya are as manifold as the various forms she acquires. To this effect Dr. B.K. Kakoti (1949) comments, “*The Kalika Purana harmonises the amorous conception of the goddess with the dreaded goddess Kali by presenting the picture of a goddess in threefold aspects assumed in different moods. In her amorous mood the goddess holds a yellow garland in her hand and stands on a white corpse. When her armour is gone she takes up the sword and stands on a red lotus placed on a bare white corpse. In her mood of benevolence (Kamada) she mounts upon a lion so she assumes one form or another according to her whims (Kamarupini)*”. Another significant narrative comes from the Devi Bhagavata Purana (eleventh century) where it is described as the after-effect of the love-play between Vishnu and the goddess Earth. At the end of his dalliance of a year of gods (360 human years), he declared that the goddess would be worshipped on several auspicious occasions and links the Earth’s menstrual cycle specifically to the Kamakhya peetha. It is further mentioned in the Devi Bhagavata Purana that the goddess appears in Kamakhya temple during her menstrual period. Later texts such as the Kumbhika Tantra, Kamakhya is praised as the greatest peetha in the *Kali Yuga* where taking a piece of the goddess’ menstrual cloth will lead to liberation. Thus, when the goddess menstruates for three days, the doors of the temple are closed and no pilgrim is allowed inside the sanctum as it is believed that the Mother Earth becomes unclean for those days. During this time any kind of farming work is not taken on. Daily worship and other religious performances are also stopped during the Ambubachi Mela of Guwahati in Assam. On the fourth day the temple doors are opened only after Devi Kamakhya is bathed and the other rituals are executed. It is then believed that Mother Earth has retrieved her purity. The devotees of the Goddess are now allowed to enter the temple for worshipping Devi Kamakhya. The Prasad is distributed on the fourth day in two forms- Angodak and Angabastra. Angodak literally means the fluid part of the body whereas Angabastra means the cloth covering the body. People connected to the narratives, symbolism and myths of the Ambubachi, thus carrying on the history of the festival percolating down to generations. Their personal stories were also interwoven along with the stories of the festivals allowing them an opportunity to be a part of the narrative. Thus their personal identities intertwined with the culture and origin of the festival creating a collective sense of identity or collective identity. The elements of the built fabric gain significance during the festive times with the narratives adding layers of meaning to such spaces.

4.5.1.8 Movement

As described earlier, the festival of Ambubachi has a dynamic and fluid character. Such spaces promote movement and participation of the attendees. The participants were free to move around from one vantage point to another and they could either participate actively or just be passive audiences. The spaces connected to the festival were easily navigable with the help of focal points which define these spaces. The huge throng of crowds added to the dynamicity of the physical setting of the festival. The movement of the participants were encouraged by the various informal activities occurring in various locations of the festival. The *Mela* provided grounds for shared involvement of the participants. The Kamakhya temple as the focal point around which the entire stage is set, the auxiliary event spaces such as the nearby shrines, residential camps, encourage people to participate at their own pace and level of involvement. The permeability of these event spaces allowing entry and exit at various points is another spatial attribute which enables participants to engage with the event at their convenience (Fig. 4.30). Thus through diverse experiences created by the spatial attributes, the festival is rendered a dynamic nature.

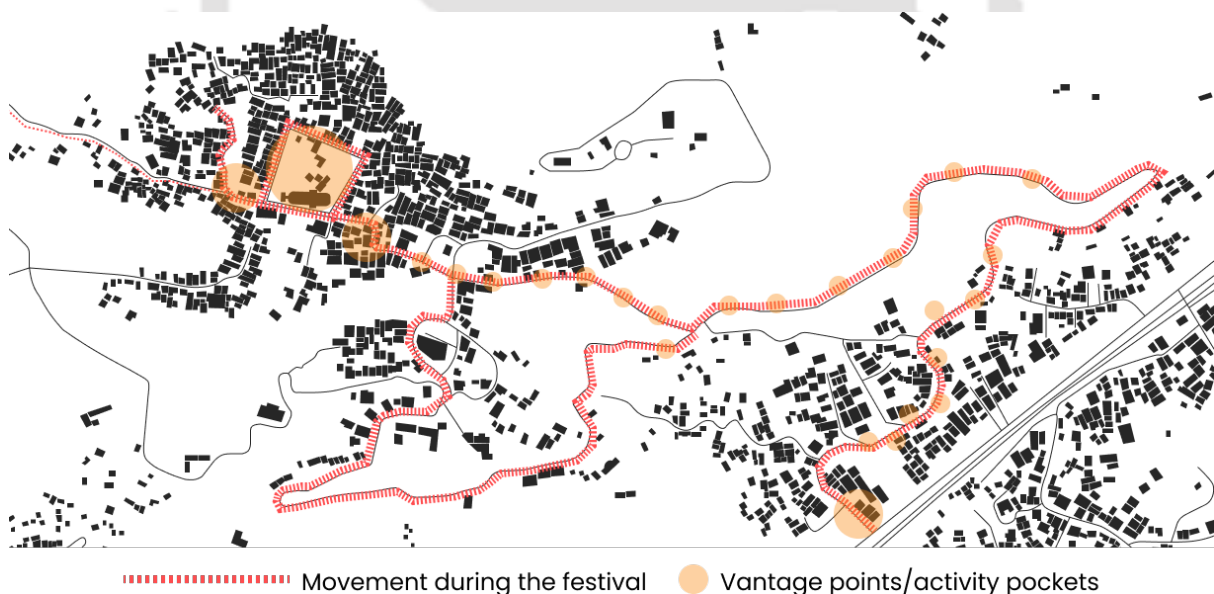


Figure 4.30: Movement during the event of Ambubachi Mela

4.5.1.9 Embeddedness

The present form of celebration of the Ambubachi Mela as an amalgam of various narratives weaved around Kamakhya Temple and can be traced back to the Pala dynasty. The temple was

rediscovered by the Koch king Visva Singha around the sixteenth century and later rebuilt to the present form by his son Naranarayana. The essence of the festival is embedded in the celebration of the Sakta Tantra as the 'cult of strength'. The site of the festival assumed a new significance during the emerging Indian nationalist movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This once remote and obscure region of Assam gained prominence among Indians (particularly Bengalis) due to the asserted connections between the Assam and Bengal region highlighting their linguistic, historical, cultural and religious links embodied in peethas such as the Kamakhya. This led to the prominence of the festival among people from Bengal and the rest of India. The tourism promotions of the government have added to the surge of popularity of the festival in its present form. The festival of Ambubachi as the culminating point for all tantric rituals and symbolism is thus embedded in the spatial settings of the temple. The annual Ambubachi fair held during Ambubachi in the precinct of the temple spatially roots the festival to its place of manifestation. In Ambubachi Mela, the central core is the historical site of the Kamakhya temple. The other urban spaces that are associated with this festival create an ephemeral city with elastic boundaries that spreads over the entire Nilachal hill of Guwahati. Similar to a city, the site for Ambubachi Mela has all the functions replicating a permanent city including social infrastructures such as temporary hospitals, markets, police station and also local governance. These activities are spread out over various zones with each zone having their own social structure. Even though the site for this festival is spatially segregated, and opportunities for social interaction are not confined within the zones, the culmination occurs at the site of the mela where all the devotees congregate.

4.5.1.10 Inferences

The form of manifestation of Ambubachi Mela engages the built fabric and the event which contributes to the festive experience. The spatial aspects contributing to the interweaving the festivities with the context are deciphered by analysing under the nine processes which augment the event-space relationship as derived from literature. Fig. 4.31 comprises the list of spatial aspects which contribute to the overall holistic experience of the festival.

Table 4.3: Transcription and interpretation of interview during the festival of Ambubachi Mela in Guwahati

Can you briefly describe your experience of the Ambubachi Mela? The sequence of events and your feelings during the experience?

Transcribed Interview Questions and Answers	Event-space relationship	Spatial Aspects
A1 I have been a part of Kamakhya temple and Ambubachi Mela for more than two decades now. With the development of communication facilities the number of devotees/ pilgrims/ visitors/ tourists have increased many fold. With the increased number of people visiting, various additional arrangements had to be made. The objective of Ambubachi Mela was to devote oneself to the worship of Goddess Kamakhya which required meditation and sanctity of the mind.	Scale Triangulation	Scale of the space (with and linearity of the enclosure of the event spaces) allows perspective on the sheer number of participants Interaction or a sense of community, between two strangers in a public space is encouraged by a third activity or object they can both share. During Ambubachi Mela, the culminating point is the deity Kamakhya who is the spiritual focus of the devotees and visitors.
A6 You can see people rejoicing in the sounds, chanting, discourses on religion, bhajan and impromptu dance accompanied by dhol. These sounds are like the flow of the river of knowledge and it makes everyone go into a state of devotion and spirituality unknowingly.	Granularity	A series of spaces or a series of experiences both within the space and throughout the event encourages personal interaction with the event, to social interaction with the larger urban setting and the crowd.
A2 I feel rejuvenated when I come to Ambubachi Mela. It is all about devotion for Maa Kamakhya that makes me forgo all physical hardships. I have travelled all the way from Bengal to reach here, but I do not feel any tiredness and no amount of physical hardship will affect my devotion.	Sensuality Movement	Visual setting of the festival transports one to a surreal experience. As emotions are heightened, these event spaces gain special importance as sites for collective memory and attachment.
A3 There are all kinds of people here and we had to wait in the queue to have a darshan of Maa Kamakhya for 3 hours. But it helps that everyone here is also waiting for their turn. It makes waiting for long hours endurable. What further helps are the various activities happening around us	Sensuality Granularity	Dynamic spaces which accommodate multiple nodes of activity and groups allowing experience at many levels. Designated zones for various activities

How did you interact with your fellow participants of the festival?

A6	Devotion is definitely a reason why I attend Ambubachi Mela, but getting to meet people here is what I consider fortunate. This is what keeps me coming back to the mela every year	Intimacy	Formal and informal interactions facilitates formation of social and emotional bond between the event and the individuals involved Intimacy can be facilitated by focus, where attention and views are directed by common narratives and landmarks binding all participants in the event.
----	--	----------	---

How did you interact with your fellow participants of the festival?

Transcribed Interview Questions and Answers		Event-space relationship	Spatial Aspects
A10	There is something in the air here that makes you feel connected to one and all . The people here are so helpful and courteous that they go out of the way to help you out. You will see all kinds of people here and they all are in harmony with each other . Even though the accommodation camps are full with so many devotees, and space is minimal, we trust one another since Kamakhya deity watches over us all .	Intimacy	By providing a sense of enclosure and limit to the event as people and activity are compressed together during the mela, these urban spaces can facilitate intimacy. Interface providing scope for active/passive engagement
A7	I am a widow and even though there are so many people here, I still feel valued and safe . This experience is not similar to being in a crowded railway station, wherein, being a female, one is looked upon as a mere object and not a person of value	Intimacy	Intimacy is further enhanced by sharing the same physical space allowing people to see and being seen.

What is the significance of Ambubachi Mela for you? Have you observed any changes over time?

A6	Maa (Kamakhya deity) beckons us and we come here every year . All our wishes are fulfilled when we pray to Maa. This was my wish to have a 'darshan' of Ma before I die.	Narratives	Narratives related to the festival transcends time and space thus creating continuity
A4	I have visited Ambubachi Mela for more than a decade now. Coming here almost feels like meeting one's family members. A sense of attachment and belonging akin to one's own home grows over time.	Intimacy	Narratives creating a sense of attachment thus connecting the temporal to the static and creating a sense of collective rootedness

A8	With the involvement of various organisations and availability of free food, accommodation, free transportation, the scale of the festival has become bigger which attracts the large number of visitors. Despite this, the Sanyasis and Sages who visit this mela still observe fast during this period, which was the original way of displaying one's devotion to Kamakhya Devi.	Narratives	Narratives co-ordinated with the performance of rituals occurring over time thus creating continuity
----	--	------------	--

What is the significance of Ambubachi Mela for you? Have you observed any changes over time?

Transcribed Interview Questions and Answers	Event-space relationship	Spatial Aspects
A1	We stock up on the daily household requirements of food a week before the mela as it gets difficult for us to venture out of our homes because of the crowd. The main road gets congested hugely during the time of the mela creating inconvenience to pedestrians and vehicles alike. This year (2017) private vehicles were not allowed to enter the Kamakhya road. But as residents, we have our pass, hence our vehicles were allowed.	Movement Territory Movement along the festival routes Movement outside the festival space Demarcated and defined boundaries setting aside the temporal from the everyday
A9	Even though the walk uphill is steep, we enjoy the walk. There are so many colourful wares that are sold on the pavement and so many activities happening at the same time. Also, the pathways are wide enough to accommodate the crowd and maintain distance among the visitors.	Movement Granularity Movement from one point to another culminating at the final destination Presence of multiple nodes of activity and experience at many levels.

What is the significance of the location for the celebration of the festival?

A10	I am a regular at many holy fairs across India. I have visited them all - Kumbh Mela, Joydeb Mela, Ganga Sagar Mela, you name it and I have been there. But there is no feeling like coming to visit Maa (Kamakhya deity).	Embeddedness Narratives Presence of symbolic spatial elements which enhance the reconnect with the festival
A3	The natural landscape here, water bodies, plants and trees is so calming and peaceful. It makes you feel like you have entered a different world altogether.	Territory Sensuality Defined edges and vantage points creating various levels of spatial experiences

A2	As the Devi Bhagavata Purana mentions, Kamakhya, the place of the yoni-mandala, the place of the beautiful [goddess] Tripura Bhairavi, is the best of all places and the original home of [the goddess] Mahamaya. There is no better place on earth. The goddess appears there every month during her menstrual period.	Embeddedness	The Kamakhya Temple acts as the focal point that connects the devotees with the narratives, spatially embedding the temple
----	---	--------------	--



Spatial Aspects	Event-space relationship	Spatial Aspects	Event-space relationship
TERRITORY	• Change in scale of the event space • The surrounding hills adding to the enclosure quality • Billboards, signages, temporary structures as visual markers giving a sense of orientation • Rerouting of vehicular traffic • Entrance gateway, welcome gateways as focal points • Distinct morphology of the edges • Lighting and decorations • Symbolic meaning of colours	NARRATIVE	• Focal points • Symbolic spaces • Pause points having gathering spaces • Permeable edges
INTIMACY	• Edges containing the event activities providing a sense of enclosure • Permeable spaces • Spillover to surrounding spaces • Visibility of activities allowing passive participation	SENSUALITY	• Visual setting of the festival • The scale of the crowd • Surrounding landscape creating enclosure • Designated zones for various activities • Temporary structures as focal points • Performance of narratives • Symbolic colours and visual motifs
SCALE	• Expandable spaces to accommodate the scale of the event • Networked spaces • The zones spread out in various locations of the city	MOVEMENT	• Activity nodes at various locations • Wide linear space • Networked event auxiliary spaces • Focal points • Distinct points of pauses • Permeable event spaces • Spillover spaces
GRANULARITY	• Multiple nodes of activity • Dynamic and fluid spaces for informal activities • Defined zones for formal activities • Spillover spaces • Permeable event spaces • Multiple points of pauses	EMBEDDEDNESS	• Spatial embeddedness of the temple • Symbolic rooting of the festival • Historical/mythical base of the festival
TRIANGULATION	• Enclosure quality • Presence of focal points in terms of the Mela and the temple • Multiple points of pauses with gathering spaces • Spaces for informal and formal performances		

Figure 4.31: Spatial aspects which contribute to the experience of the festival of Ambubachi Mela in Guwahati

4.5.2 Festive experience of Chhath Puja

Chhath Puja is the biggest festival for the people of Bihar living within Bihar or across the country or world and is often referred to as “Mahaparv”. This festival is celebrated over a duration of four days and interspersed with various rituals and festivities. The spatial setting of the festival is predominantly at the ghats of the Brahmaputra river apart from several ponds and temples of the city where devotees gather to perform the puja. The numerous ghats as sites of celebration connect various focal points from the north to the south of the city. A sense of gratitude for the five elements of nature and ancestral worship forms the base for the celebration of Chhath Puja which is celebrated on the sixth day or *Shasti*, exactly 4 days from Diwali and lasts for 4 more days requiring arduous observance from the worshipers. It is an ancient festival which traces its roots to Sun worship in India. The dawn goddess Usha or *Chhathi Maayi* is worshipped along with *Surya*. The festivities start with the cleaning of ghats and other water bodies as the festival is based on the idea of cleansing the body and mind and the surroundings. The festival of Chhath requires the devotees to strictly adhere to the rituals which includes fasting for two days at least without drinking water for the fulfilment of their vows. The prasada or offerings include sweets, rice porridge, and Thekua prepared on the third day are usually cooked in an earthen oven called *chulhas*. Wide variety of fruits, areca nut, ginger, cloves, turmeric which are sourced from the harvest of the season are the other offerings in the winnow.

Lasting a duration of four days, the Chhath Puja rituals starts with *Nahay Khay* where devotees take a dip in the river and later carry home the holy water to prepare the offerings of rice porridge. This is followed by *Lohanda*, which is the second day of the festival. Devotees observe fast on this day that ends in the evening after sunset. On this day, puri, kheer, and bananas are consumed by the devotees and distributed to neighbours as well. After consuming the offering, devotees observe a fast for 36 hours which is followed by a celebratory meal in the evening. During *Sandhya arghya* (evening offerings) devotees take a dip in the water body in the evening and worship the setting sun with offerings. On the ghat, a canopy of five sugarcanes signifying the *Pancha mahabhutas* (5 elements: earth, water, air, fire, ether) is erected and lamps are placed beneath it. This ritual is known as the *Kasi bharna* where the lighted lamps signify the sun sustaining life itself. The last day of the festival is *Usha arghya*, where devotees give offerings to the rising sun. Devotees gather early in the morning at the ghats to prepare for the rituals, followed by waiting patiently for the sun to rise in the east.

After the offerings, they break their fast. As crowds of devotees throng the roads, carrying baskets of offerings on their heads, the festival occupies the everyday spaces in an intermingling of tradition and modernity, religious spirituality and rituals, faith and commerce, *bhakti* and festive fervour. Ten interviews (Table. 4.4) conducted during the festive event at various locations of the festive event aided in understanding the event space relationships which have been elaborated under the nine aspects as formulated through literature. Elaborated further are the various spatial aspects of the Chhath Puja festival which contribute in enhancing the festive experience.

4.5.2.1 A sense of 'territory'

During the event of Chhath Puja, the ghats of the Brahmaputra river come alive with the festivities related to the event which sets it apart from the physical fabric of the city and defines the spatial limit of the event. Having defined edges and focal points at various historic locations of the city and providing diverse platforms for engagement with the event, a separation in space and time from the everyday life of the city is perceived. Such spaces also act as urban reminders of the city's past due to their location along several historic locations of the city. The intense festive mood is palpable within the spatial limits of this festival which gradually decreases as one moves away from it (Fig. 4.32 & 4.33). The homogeneity or sameness of the edges containing the event space with similar building heights and facade characteristics enhances the sense of territory. The adjoining areas with narrow lanes, busy vehicular traffic, diverse formal and informal activities stand in stark contrast to these festive sites with their visual characteristics defined by decorated temporary stalls, festive rituals, and the general mood of celebration.

4.5.2.2 A sense of 'intimacy'

The event spaces contribute to formation of a sense of intimacy by forming social relations and emotional bonds during the festival of Chhath Puja. The formation of such informal bonds is facilitated by the event space by compressing people and activity together in the limited space of the event which enhances this sense. Unknown strangers come together in this shared space, to partake in the shared rituals and festive activities, and form a sense of *communitas* amongst them. Thousands of people occupying the same space, experience the retelling of narratives and reconnection to their roots, thus contributing to a collective memory as result of the intimate

environment of the event space. Being involved in rituals such as offering *arghya* and offerings to Sun God, standing knee deep in the river with folded hands, chanting *mantras* and singing folk songs helps in reinforcing the intimate environment created. Thus, the spatial aspects which affect the level of intimacy and enhance the festive experience include the defined edges which provide a sense of enclosure, as well as permeable spaces which provide scope for passive participation by providing gathering spaces at vantage points (Fig. 4.34 & Fig. 4.35). The linearity of the space also aids in creating a visual link and enhances the scope of participation.



----- Intensity of the festive mood gradually decreases as one moves away from the spatial limits of the event space

Figure 4.32: Intensity of sense of territory observed during the Chhath Puja celebrations in M.G. Road (Panbazar to Bharalumukh precinct)

4.5.2.3 The sense of 'sensuality'

Chhath puja is a sensorial event that artfully engages the senses through the various festivities and rituals associated with this event. The essence of this festival lies in its colourfulness, dynamicity and festive manifestations which present the cultural ethos of the community

celebrating it. The wide expanse of the river, surrounded by the hills provide a picturesque backdrop for the performance of the festival. The temporary stalls erected by the devotees, each unique from others, decorated with marigold and sometimes by symbolic elements like the replica of the *Rath* of Sun temple, and other cultural markers, is a visual retreat. One could observe people interacting with these structures by clicking pictures of the structures as well as themselves. Standing tall, and brightly lit, these temporary structures catch one's eyes from afar.



----- Intensity of the festive mood gradually decreases as one moves away from the spatial limits of the event space

Figure 4.33: Intensity of sense of territory observed during the Chhath Puja celebrations in M.G. Road (Uzanbazar precinct)

The various locations of the Chhath puja celebrations, provides a series of viewscapes, each distinct in itself. People play drums, pipes, and other instruments that add to the festivity of the space. People sing various folk songs and chant *mantras* while performing their rituals. After the rituals are over, prasada is distributed amongst the devotees as well as nearby people.

Informal vendors sell their wares and various other food items nearby. The presence of a performance stage provided opportunities for performance of bhajan and other devotional songs that inundated these event spaces in the evenings after the rituals were completed. Moreover, the sense of being amongst the crowd, setting the stage for performance of the rituals collectively, is an immersive experience. This ensemble of sensory attributes enhances the festive experience of the event. The spatial attributes such as defined edges, networked spaces, scale of the event, temporary structures as spatial and visual markers of the event and the varying enclosures along the various locations of the festival allow for a sensory experience (Fig. 4.36).



Figure 4.34: The spatial aspects enhancing intimacy during the event of Chhath Puja in M.G. Road (Panbazar to Bharalumukh precinct)

4.5.2.4 The 'scale' of the event

The scale of the event is realised as a sum of parts comprising the entire scale of the festival as the entire city becomes a stage for the manifestation of the event. Different locations in the city

are weaved together the city spaces into a seamless narrative (Fig. 4.37). As one traverses towards the ghats on foot, the multitude of activities occurring at these event spaces as prominent as the vast expanse of the river and the surrounding hills makes one realise the scale of the festival. The balance between the spatial settings and the activities occurring therein imparts cohesivity and dynamicity to the event. A sharp transition is experienced as one traverses on foot through the narrow lanes to the expansive event space created during Chhath Puja by seamlessly binding the ghats and the wide expanse of the river to form the spatial setting of the event. The linearity of the adjoining streets along the length of the river Brahmaputra allow spectators to participate in the event at their own pace.



Figure 4.35: The spatial aspects enhancing intimacy during the event of Chhath Puja in M.G. Road (Uzanbazar precinct)



1. Prasada



2. Chanting of mantras while performing their rituals



3. Music adding festivity to the space



4. Wide expanse of the river framed by the hills



5. Stalls selling various puja wares

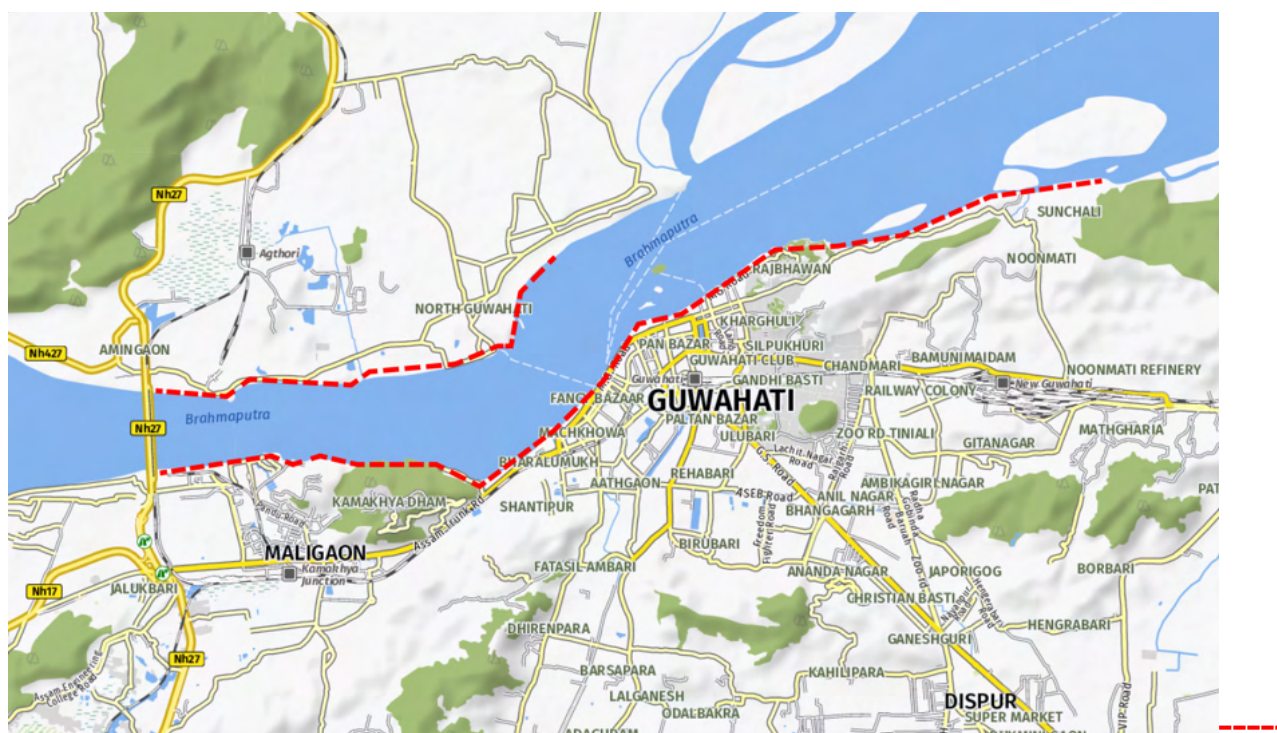


6. Temporary stalls decorated with symbolic elements

Figure 4.36: Sense of sensuality created by diverse experiences during Chhath Puja

4.5.2.5 Granularity

The festival of Chhath Puja can be experienced at many levels as it accommodates multiple nodes of activity allowing people to choose to actively or passively engage in the festivities. Different rituals take place at different times and in different locations aids in the experience of each day of the event differently. The flexibility of the spaces to accommodate different activities on different days during the event animates the space and hence allows for diverse spatial experience within the same spatial context. The adjacent everyday spaces such as the roads become a part of the festival and allows for both active engagement such as the ritual of *Buniya Bari* (prostration march) or passive engagement as onlookers. For the smooth running of the festival, the organising committee demarcates and allocates the spaces in the ghats which helps people orient themselves in the crowded vast space. A hierarchy of spaces were also observed in terms of the location of the allocated spaces and the temporary structures in terms of the intricacy and attention to detail given to the visualisation of these stalls. These myriad experiences present a vivid image of the event due to its granularity, the spatial aspects of which are summarised in Fig. 4.41.



- Location of ghats

Figure 4.37: Celebration zones of the festive event of Chhath Puja

4.5.2.6 Triangulation

Being an episodic and granular event, the festival of Chhath Puja consists of many elements which binds people together by encouraging them to form bonds over the proceedings of diverse rituals and festivities (Fig. 4.38). The presence of crowds, movement and performance of festivities ties people together and leads to creation of shared collective experience. By infusing a sense of *communitas* such experiences attribute the aspect of ‘triangulation’ to the event space. The devotees, consisting mainly of the women of the family, stand in knee deep water as they perform *arghya* (pouring water and milk from the palm), while other family members join in with their *arghya*. The standing devotee facing East takes turns offering *Prasada*, while the river comes alive with the sparkling of thousands of lighted lamps. People could also be observed rolling on the ground and performing *buniya bari*. Such performances of rituals as a series of connected events add to the narrative of the festival adding the element of triangulation, enabling people to participate in shared experiences and enhancing the festive experience.

4.5.2.7 Narrative

As most festivals in India, Chhath Puja is infused with rich narratives of mythology and legends. There are references to this festival in both the Epics and Puranas and can be traced to Sun worship. The essence of the festival is a sense of gratitude for the five elements and ancestral worship. These narratives woven along with the rituals are re-enacted every year during the festival of Chhath Puja. Along with the myths and legends, narratives passed down to generations also include stories around celebrations in their native place in Bihar. Owing to the non-native nature of the festival, these narratives impart symbolic significance to the spatial elements in their present place of celebration. These narratives are replete with place memories and the significance of worshipping Sun God and *Chhathi Maayi* (Fig. 4.39). The ability of these event spaces to exist as parts with narratives from different spatial contexts contribute to the whole and is intrinsic to holistic understanding of the event. This aspect also helps in linking various locations to form a unified narrative.



Figure 4.38: Triangulation during the event of Chhath Puja

4.5.2.8 Movement

The festival of Chhath Puja is a very dynamic event where the participants get the opportunity to partake in a variety of festivities during the four days of the festival. Weaving multiple narratives in a continuous sequence imparts the festival with this dynamic character. The initial rituals of the festival called *Nahay Khay* are carried out at the ghats of the river where devotees take a dip and take home the holy water to prepare the offerings of raw rice porridge. Later the

devotees observe a fast of 36 hours and break their fast by taking a dip again in the river in the evening called *Sandhya Arghya* while offering their prayers to the setting sun. Finally on the fourth day, the ritual of *Usha Arghya* sees the devotees giving offerings to the rising sun by taking a dip in the river. Apart from the ghats, the streets come alive with the throng of devotees carrying *prasada* on their head while some use it as a space to perform the ritual of *buniya bari* (Fig. 4.40). The river ghats as the focal point around which the stage for various rituals are set, the adjacent streets for movement of devotees and performance of rituals alike, the spillover spaces adds to the festive experience of movement. The permeability of these event spaces allowing entry and exit at multiple points, provides the opportunity to the participants and spectators alike to take part in the various rituals and festivities as per their convenience. Thus, these diverse experiences allow the participants to move along to the proceedings of the event to gather a multitude of experiences created by the diverse spatial attributes, thereby rendering a dynamic nature to the festival.



Symbolic spatial elements inspired by the narratives of the festival visible in the temporary stalls put up during Chhath Puja in Guwahati



Narratives are replete with stories of the reigning deity Chhathi Maayi and Sun God

Figure 4.39: Reenactment of narratives during the event of Chhath Puja



1. Devotees carrying bamboo baskets with offerings for the puja on the banks of the river

2. A devotee performing Buniya Bari on the streets leading to the river bank

Figure 4.40: Movement during the event of Chhath Puja

4.5.2.9 *Embeddedness*

The present form of Chhath Puja is an amalgam of various narratives weaved together to portray a cohesive image of the festival. The ghats of the Brahmaputra as sites of the festival connect the core areas of the city and embed it in the physical fabric of the city. The streets as processional spaces of the devotees spatially manifests the festival in the everyday settings of the city. Though non-native in nature, the festival has been able to manifest itself in myriad ways in various urban spaces in the city. Over time, this festival has been able to root itself into the city fabric and has sustained its presence over the years. The spatial elements which have helped in establishing firm links into the urban fabric are the Brahmaputra river and its ghats, and the core historic areas of the city spanning from Kachomari ghat, Fancy Bazar, Shukreshwar Ghat, Noonmati, Sunsali, Pandu, Lalmati, Basistha, Meen Bhawan ghat, Birubari and Jyotikuchi as few more get added every year as the popularity of the festival grows. The temporal spaces of Chhath Puja along the banks of river Brahmaputra have added new layers of colour and vibrancy in the socio-cultural environment of the city. This festival has been able to weave itself in the fabric of the city, creating new urban spaces and an existence in the social structure of the city, by crafting their identity and imprinting the same on the image of the city. By adapting this festival to the urban environment of Guwahati, transformation in terms of manifestation of the festival visually and spatially can be observed as new ideas and cultures get absorbed and embeds it in its spaces of manifestation.

Table 4.4: Transcription and interpretation of interview during the festival of Chhath Puja in Guwahati

Can you briefly describe your experience of the Chhath Puja? The sequence of events and your feelings during the experience?

Transcribed Interview Questions and Answers	Event-space relationship	Spatial Aspects
P1 My parents are native of Bihar, but I was born here in Guwahati. We think of this festival to be a celebration of the entire family. My parents are just over here today, distributing prasada to the devotees. Every year around this time all our relatives come to Guwahati. We all help our parents to prepare the prasada. We take responsibility to procure the ingredients, to arrange for the vessels, prepare the chulhas and the bamboo winnows where the prasada is offered.	Granularity Intimacy	• Point of pause • Interactive Edge
P4 The addition of more number of ghats and rerouting of traffic to make the roads free for pedestrian movement has allowed us to enjoy the festival freely. Earlier, it was difficult to navigate to the ghats while carrying the huge prasada basket on our heads. The M.G. Road is a completely commercial area but during the festival, the shops leave out space for the festival to take place. Everyone in their own way sort of contribute towards the festival	Territory Scale Movement	• Distinct morphology of edges • Flexible built typology • Sameness of edges • Expandable spaces to accommodate the scale of the event • Networked event spaces • Focal points • Permeable event spaces • Distinct points of pauses

How did you interact with your fellow participants of the festival?

Transcribed Interview Questions and Answers	Event-space relationship	Spatial Aspects
P5 The entire festival of Chhath is about building the sense of community as we do everything together. We offer our arghya together, distribute prasada and sweets together as well as sing folk songs together. Our entire family, our relatives, neighbours, all are part of this festival. There are hundreds of devotees who perform all these rituals together and it makes us all feel like being part of one large family.	Scale Triangulation	• Expandable spaces to accommodate the scale of the event • The length and width of the ghats • Sameness of edges • Spaces for informal and formal performances • Multiple points of pauses with gathering spaces

What is the significance of Chhath Puja for you? Have you observed any changes over time?

Transcribed Interview Questions and Answers	Event-space relationship	Spatial Aspects
P3 For us celebrating this festival is all about connecting to our roots . Even though we have settled here in Guwahati since many years, this festival helps us in retaining our connect to our native place . We have tried to maintain the rituals followed since generations. Though now, people are also adopting new ways like decorating their space in the ghat. There is proper planning nowadays, so the ghats are allocated accordingly, safety measures are followed everywhere, volunteers are there to help devotees when required.	Embeddedness Sensuality	• Spatial embeddedness of rituals and activities to the event spaces • Symbolic rooting of the festival • Presence of symbolic spatial elements which enhance the reconnect with the festival • Historical/mythical base of the festival • Visual setting of the festival • Symbolic colours and visual motifs • Temporary structures as focal points

What is the significance of the location for the celebration of the festival?

Transcribed Interview Questions and Answers	Event-space relationship	Spatial Aspects
P2 The river is the most integral aspect of the festival of Chhath Puja. Without the river, or any water body source, we cannot perform our rituals. We have been visiting this ghat each year to perform the rituals. But a lot depends on the river, as every year the ghats get transformed and some get added while some are no longer accessible.	Embeddedness Narratives	• Spatial embeddedness of rituals and activities to the event spaces • Symbolic spaces • Focal points

4.5.2.10 Inferences

The spatial aspects which enhance the festive experience of the festive event of Chhath Puja can be summarised as seen in Fig. 4.41. The nine processes of event-space relationship was utilised to analyse the various spatial aspects of these event spaces.

Spatial Aspects	Event-space relationship	Spatial Aspects	Event-space relationship
TERRITORY	• Distinct morphology of the edges • Multiple focal points • Urban reminders • Homogeneity or sameness of edges • Lighting and decorations • Symbolic meaning of colours and objects • Visual markers • Surrounding hills and the river add to the enclosure quality • Rerouting of vehicular traffic	NARRATIVE	• Focal points • Symbolic spaces • Enclosure quality • Permeable edges
INTIMACY	• Edges containing the event activities • Permeable spaces • Spillover to surrounding spaces • Visibility of activities allowing passive participation • Defined zones for activities	SENSUALITY	• Visual setting of the festival • The scale of the crowd • Surrounding landscape creating enclosure • Designated zones for various activities • Temporary structures as focal points • Performance of narratives • Symbolic colours and visual motifs • The changing surface texture from the river to the sandy banks to the paved streets
SCALE	• Expandable spaces to accommodate the scale of the event • Networked spaces connecting parts to form the whole • The length and width of the ghats	MOVEMENT	• Activity nodes at various locations • Wide expanse of the ghats • Focal points • Distinct points of pauses • Permeable event spaces • Spillover spaces • Foreground encouraging participation
GRANULARITY	• Multiple nodes of activity • Dynamic and fluid spaces for informal activities • Defined zones for formal activities • Spillover spaces • Permeable event spaces	EMBEDDEDNESS	• Spatial embeddedness • Symbolic rooting of the festival • Presence of symbolic spatial elements which enhance the reconnect with the festival
TRIANGULATION	• Enclosure quality • Presence of focal points such as the river, ghats • Spaces for informal and formal performances		

Figure 4.41: Spatial aspects which contribute to the experience of the festival of Chhath Puja in Guwahati

4.5.3 Spatial qualities that enhance the experience of festive events

The analysis of the spatial qualities that enhance the festive experience of the two festive events under study displayed many common aspects. Fig. 4.44 lists the general spatial characteristics which contribute towards the nine processes of event-space relationship and hence contributes

positively to the experience of festive events. These aspects are further compared with spatial aspects of the event-space relationship to assess their significance (Fig. 4.45).

Spatial Aspects	Event-space relationship	Spatial Aspects	Event-space relationship
TERRITORY	• Distinct morphology of the edges • Homogeneity or sameness of edges • Symbolic elements • Change in scale of the event space from adjacent built fabric • Visual markers giving a sense of orientation • Rerouting of vehicular traffic • Landscape contrasting to the built city form • Multiple focal points • Lighting and decorations	NARRATIVE	• Focal points • Symbolic spaces • Permeable edges • Enclosure quality • Pause points having gathering spaces
INTIMACY	• Edges containing the event activities providing a sense of enclosure • Permeable spaces • Spillover to surrounding spaces • Visibility of activities allowing passive participation • Defined zones for activities	SENSUALITY	• Visual setting of the festival • The scale of the crowd • Symbolic colours and visual motifs • Lights and decorations • Surrounding landscape creating enclosure • Designated zones for various activities • Temporary structures as focal points • Performance of narratives • Changing enclosures provide a series of views
SCALE	• Expandable spaces to accommodate the scale of the event • Networked spaces connecting parts to form the whole • The length and width of the ghats • The zones spread out in various locations of the city • Spatial contrast from surrounding fabric to perceive scale	MOVEMENT	• Activity nodes at various locations • Networked event spaces • Focal points • Permeable event spaces • Distinct points of pauses • Spillover spaces • Foreground encouraging participation • Diverse enclosure quality defining separate stretches of the event spaces
GRANULARITY	• Multiple nodes of activity • Dynamic and fluid spaces for informal activities • Defined zones for formal activities • Spillover spaces • Permeable event spaces • Multiple points of pauses • Foreground encouraging participation	EMBEDDEDNESS	• Spatial embeddedness of rituals and activities to the event spaces • Symbolic rooting of the festival • Presence of symbolic spatial elements which enhance the reconnect with the festival • Historical/mythical base of the festival
TRIANGULATION	• Enclosure quality • Presence of focal points • Visual link to focal points • Spaces for informal and formal performances • Multiple points of pauses with gathering spaces		

Figure 4.42: Spatial qualities that enhance the experience of events

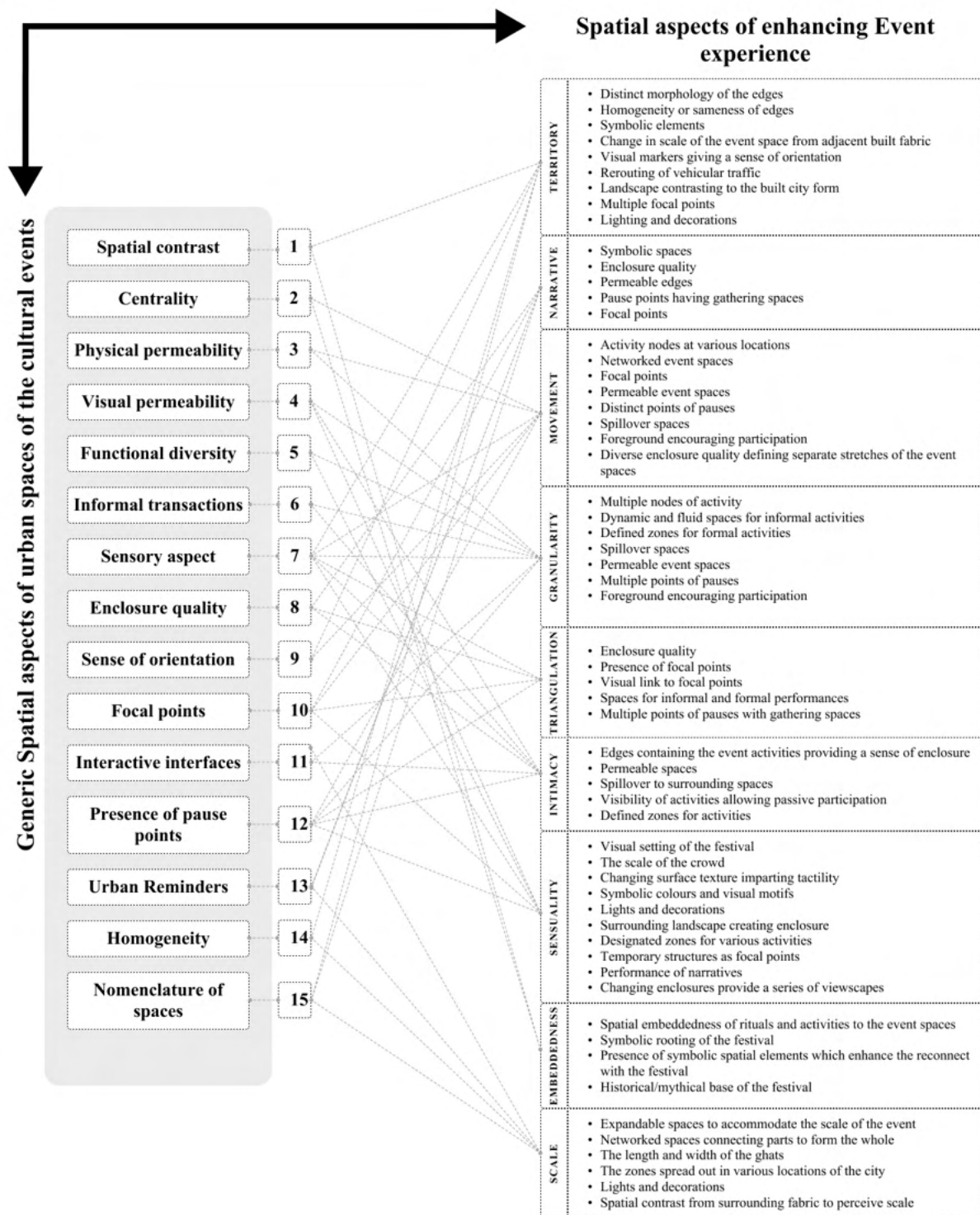


Figure 4.43: Links between spatial aspects of urban spaces of selected cultural event spaces and spatial aspects that enhance the experience of these cultural events

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter addresses the objectives listed under the second and fourth questions related to spatial characteristics of the everyday urban spaces and the cultural event spaces. The fifteen spatial aspects of the urban spaces where the cultural events are celebrated were listed out to fulfil the objective 4 (b) of the research design as can be seen in Fig. 4.24. This was done by analysis of the urban precincts where the two selected cultural events are celebrated on the basis of their visual, functional, morphological, social, perceptual and temporal dimensions. The construct of Place Identity due to spatial aspects for each of the case studies was analysed based on participant observation and interviews of participants during the celebration of the festivals. Fig. 4.44 lists the spatial aspects enhancing the festive experience and thus fulfilling objective 2 of the research design. This was done by analysing the spatial characteristics which enhance the event space relationship through the nine processes derived from literature review. Comparison was carried out by finding out commonalities between the two researched perspectives as shown in Fig. 4.45 which shows links between the spatial characteristics of the urban spaces containing the festivals and the spatial aspects enhancing festive experience. A set of sixteen spatial attributes were inferred, as shown in Table 4.3, which highlight their significant role during both festive and everyday urbanism. These sixteen aspects which keep the essence of the place intact should be considered while any intervention strategy is undertaken in the city.



Table 4.5: The sixteen spatial attributes which enhance Place Identity and their presence in the six precincts

	SPATIAL ASPECTS	AMBUBACHI MELA				CHHATH PUJA		Event-Space Relationship
		Kamakhyia Temple precinct	Sonaram Field precinct	Maligaon precinct	Pandu to Kamakhyia Devalaya precinct	M.G. Road - Panbazar Bharalumukh precinct	M.G. Road - Uzan Bazar precinct	
1	SPATIAL CONTRAST	- Sense of entry - Change in activity	- Open space in densely populated area - Sameness of edges	- High density - Sameness of edges	- Sameness of edges - Change in activity	- Spatial contrast due to river - Sense of entry	- Spatial contrast due to river and open spaces - Sense of entry	- Territory - Scale
2	CENTRALITY	- Network of spaces - Everyday encounter	- Network of spaces - Everyday encounter	- Network of spaces - Everyday encounter - Accessible from all directions	- Visual link leading from one point of interest to another	- Network of spaces - Everyday encounter - A connect between the old core and the new urban areas	- Everyday encounter - A connect between the old core and the new urban areas	- Movement - Scale
3	PHYSICAL PERMEABILITY	- Multiple access - Both vehicular and pedestrian access/movement	- Accessible from all directions - Significant junction/movement corridor - Everyday encounter	- Multiple access - Significant junction/movement corridor - Everyday encounter	- Everyday encounter - Single road connecting major focal points	- Significant junction/movement corridor - Everyday encounter - Both vehicular and pedestrian access/movement - A connect between the old core and the new urban areas	- Everyday encounter - A connect between the old core and the new urban areas	- Movement - Granularity
4	VISUAL PERMEABILITY	- Kamakhyia temple acts as a focal point - Surrounding hills and river below	- Everyday encounter - Edge of the river acts as a background to the open space	- Everyday encounter - Deformed grid reduces visual permeability	- Visual link leading from one point of interest to another	- Linearity of road connecting major focal points - Visual dominance of the river	- Everyday encounter - Edge of the river acts as a background to the open space	- Sensuality - Granularity - Intimacy
5	URBAN REMINDERS	- The temple and temple related formal/informal activities acting as invariants - Sensory aspects	- Reminder of the Ahom period - Landmarks/focal points	- Landmarks/focal points - Place names	- Landmarks/focal points - The temple and temple related formal/informal activities acting as invariants	- Landmarks/focal points - Street names - Heritage buildings - Colonial era structures	- Landmarks/focal points - Street names	- Narrative - Embeddedness
6	FOCAL POINTS	- Sense of orientation - Acts as Landmarks - Acts as Urban Reminders - Temple as focal point	- Sense of orientation - Acts as Landmarks - Acts as Urban Reminders - Open space as focal point	- Sense of orientation - Acts as Landmarks	- Sense of orientation - Acts as Landmarks - Pedestrian movement allowing experience of focal points	- Sense of orientation - Acts as Landmarks - Acts as Urban Reminders	- Sense of orientation - Acts as Landmarks - Acts as Urban Reminders - Open spaces as focal points	- Narrative - Movement - Triangulation - Sensuality

	SPATIAL ASPECTS	Kamakhya Temple precinct	Sonaram Field precinct	Maligaon precinct	Pandu to Kamakhya Devalaya precinct	M.G. Road - Panbazar Bharalumukh precinct	M.G. Road - Uzan Bazar precinct	Event-Space Relationship
7	ENCLOSURE QUALITY	- Distinct morphology - Strong focal point - Surrounding hills	- Changing enclosure from dense to open space - Similarity of edges	- Changing enclosure from wide to narrow space - Sameness of edges	- Distinct morphology - Surrounding hills	- River defining the edge - Public buildings along edges	- River defining the edge - Changing enclosure from dense to open space	- Narrative - Triangulation - Intimacy
8	HOMOGENEITY	- Homogeneous built fabric of surrounding areas	- Homogeneous built fabric of surrounding areas	- Homogeneous built fabric of surrounding areas - Uniformity in function	- Homogeneous built fabric of surrounding areas - Uniformity in function	- Uniformity in function - River edge giving a uniform character - Homogeneous built fabric of surrounding areas	- River edge giving a uniform character	- Territory
9	SENSORY ASPECTS	- Focal points, visual markers, enclosure quality - Flower vendors - Food stalls and informal vendors - Celebration of festivals adding to visual dimension	- Open space in dense built fabric adding to visual and tactile dimension - River edge adding to viewscape - Celebration of festivals adding to visual dimension	- Diverse formal and informal activities - Focal points, visual markers, enclosure quality	- Focal points, visual markers, enclosure quality - Surrounding hill and river edge adding to viewscape	- Focal points, visual markers, enclosure quality - River edge adding to viewscape - Diverse formal and informal activities	- River edge adding to viewscape - Green avenue, Focal points, visual markers, enclosure quality	- Territory - Triangulation - Intimacy - Granularity - Movement - Sensuality
10	SENSE OF ORIENTATION	- Focal points, visual markers, changing enclosure quality - Surrounding hills - View of the city	- Focal points - River edge - Changing enclosure quality	- Focal points - Changing enclosure quality - Footbridges and vantage points	- Focal points, visual markers, changing enclosure quality - Surrounding hills and river edge	- Focal points, landmarks - River edge	- Focal points, landmarks - River edge - Changing enclosure	- Territory - Movement
11	INTERACTIVE INTERFACES	- Interface providing scope for active/passive engagement - Passive interaction with the surrounding hills and the river - Intermittent commercial activity adds to vibrancy	- Interface providing scope for active/passive engagement - Passive interaction with the river - Open spaces accommodating variety of activities add to dynamicity	- Commercial and public building edges adds to vibrancy	- Passive interaction with the surrounding hills and the river - Residential area adds to social dimension	- Commercial and public building edges adds to vibrancy - Active and passive interaction with the river - Open spaces accommodating variety of activities add to dynamicity	- Residential area adds to social dimension - Intermittent commercial activity adds to vibrancy - Open spaces accommodating variety of activities add to dynamicity - Active and passive interaction with the river	- Granularity - Intimacy

	SPATIAL ASPECTS	Kamakhyā Temple precinct	Sonaram Field precinct	Maligaon precinct	Pandu to Kamakhya Devalaya precinct	M.G. Road - Panbazar Bharalumukh precinct	M.G. Road - Uzan Bazar precinct	Event-Space Relationship
12	INFORMAL TRANSACTIONS	- Street edges/footpaths/stairs - Shop fronts - Pedestrian movement - Spillover spaces - Permeability and accessibility	- Open space - Permeability and accessibility - Street edges/footpaths	- Street edges/footpaths/stairs/overbridge - Spillover spaces - Permeability and accessibility	- Street edges/footpaths - Pedestrian movement - Permeability and accessibility	- Street edges/footpaths - Shop fronts - Pedestrian movement - Spillover spaces - Permeability and accessibility	- Street edges/footpaths - Pedestrian movement - Permeability and accessibility	- Granularity - Intimacy
13	FUNCTIONAL DIVERSITY	- Place dependence due to presence of religious, necessary and optional activities - Diverse functions catering to both residents and tourists - Informal activities add to the diversity	- Place dependence due to celebration of festivals - Aligned with the movement pattern of the city - Informal activities add to the diversity	- Diverse functions catering to all age groups - Place dependence due to presence of necessary and optional activities - Aligned with the movement pattern of the city - Informal activities add to the diversity	- Primarily residential with presence of necessary and optional activities - Informal activities add to the diversity	- Place dependence due to presence of necessary and optional activities - Aligned with the movement pattern of the city - Informal activities add to the diversity	- Primarily residential with presence of necessary and optional activities - Informal activities add to the diversity	- Movement - Scale
14	PRESENCE OF PAUSE POINTS	- Place of worship - Diverse formal and informal activities such as food stalls, shops selling various wares - Temporal activities such as celebration of festivals	- Temporal activities such as celebration of festivals, cultural events - Diverse formal and informal activities such as meeting ground of locals, sporting activities, recreational activities	- Diverse formal and informal activities such as shops, food stalls, shops selling various wares, railway station - Temporal activities such as celebration of festivals	- Diverse formal and informal activities such as shops, food stalls, shops selling various wares, railway station, river port, temple - Temporal activities such as celebration of festivals	- Diverse formal and informal activities such as shops, food stalls, shops selling various wares, river port - Temporal activities such as celebration of festivals	- Diverse formal and informal activities such as meeting ground of locals, recreational activities, markets, parks, temples - Temporal activities such as celebration of festivals	- Narrative - Movement - Triangulation - Intimacy - Granularity - Sensuality - Embeddedness
15	NOMENCLATURE OF SPACES	- Each element has a name and a narrative behind the origin of the name and the location of the element such as the Kamakhya precinct is intricately tied to the narratives of the Kamakhya deity	- Sonaram Field was earlier the courtyard of <i>dapdar</i> - the mediaeval Ahom Burphukan's office, which was later converted to its present form	- The name <i>Maligaon</i> means the gardener's village is a centrally located area in Guwahati city - The presence of the <i>chariali</i> imparts the nomenclature, Maligaon chariali	- Pandu is supposedly named after King Pandu, father of the five Pandavas in Mahabharata	- Erstwhile known as the Strand Road during the colonial road, it was later changed to Mahatma Gandhi road or M.G. Road	- Erstwhile known as the Upper Strand Road during the colonial road, it was later changed to Uzan Bazar due to the shifting of the Chowk Bazar upstream or <i>razor</i>; other similar narratives exist behind the nomenclature of the precinct	- Embeddedness - Territory - Narrative
16	ADAPTABILITY	- Scope for temporary installations - Spillover spaces - Scope for informal activities	- Wide open space transforming for various temporal activities - Scope for temporary installations - Spillover spaces - Scope for informal activities	- Spillover spaces - Scope for informal activities	- Scope for temporary installations - Spillover spaces - Scope for informal activities - Pedestrian movement	- Scope for temporary installations - Spillover spaces - Scope for informal activities - River banks transforming temporarily to accommodate temporal activities	- Scope for temporary installations - Spillover spaces - Scope for informal activities - Open grounds and river banks transforming temporarily to accommodate temporal activities	- Granularity - Sensuality - Triangulation



Chapter 5 : PARTICIPANT’S PERCEPTION OF PLACE IDENTITY THROUGH ANALYSIS OF SELECTED CULTURAL EVENTS

The intent of this chapter is to validate the hypothesis that “Cultural events may influence the identities of people involved and their construct of Place Identity”. Focusing on the emic view adopted in this thesis, this chapter documents and analyses the participant’s perception of festivals celebrated in the case study city. Since the research is exploratory, a combination of research methods were adopted as described in the third chapter to document and interpret the manner through which participants perceive the contribution of the cultural events to place identity. The inferences from the main case study discussed are synthesised and developed into socio-spatial propositions for identity constructions in the following chapter.



5.1 Preliminary perception study

The growing complexities of urban spatiality has been discussed in the previous chapters along with their impact on people's identity. Various viewpoints, ideas and issues pertaining to people place relationships relevant to this research has been discussed. However, there was a lack in understanding people's perception on the changing nature of place relationships especially pertaining to socio-culturally laden event places during festivals. As the case study city is a complex microcosm of layered cultural, historical, mythical accounts dominated by the socio-cultural realm, the exploratory studies were significant and instrumental towards refining the research further. The preliminary exploratory study was aimed at decoding people's perception of place identity to decipher the various theoretical constructs of identity for required depth of understanding of the dimensions of meaning, experience and place engagement. The complexity and multidimensionality of the research demanded careful selection of research methods and cases which can capture the various implicit aspects of people, place and identity relationship.

This section gives an overview of the resident's perception of their city by expanding on their experience of being a part of both every day and festival urbanism. The study draws upon people's perception around the various aspects and elements of their city of residence/origin. This study is a part of the preliminary study preceding the main case study in order to gain a holistic view of an insider's perception of their city. From this study it was evident that intangibility and temporality of a city are of equal significance as its physicality. These preliminary interviews with the residents of the city helped in formulating the methodology for conducting the main case study.

'Place identity' is a very significant term in the understanding of self-identity through places with nostalgic associations. Proshansky et al. (1970) define place identity as a subset of self-identity of a person and their cognitions of the physical environment. Cognitions such as memories, ideas, feelings, values, attitudes, meanings, behaviour and experience, that define their existence in the everyday (Proshansky et al., 1970). According to Proshansky et al. (1970) these perceptions and conceptions can be categorised into two clusters, one type consists of memories, thoughts, values and settings, and the other type consists of the relationship among different settings. "Cities serve as powerful symbols and repositories of memory" as Ladd

(1997) pointed out and are constituted of layers of meanings and associations. The relationship between memory and a place is found fundamentally in the field of material culture. This relationship is performative in nature wherein performances like rituals, festivals, celebrations, events and public ceremonies create collective memories for society to remember (Connerton, 1989). Remembering is viewed as a social activity and instrumental in fostering collective identity by many scholars (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004). Reflecting on collective place memories will enable us to comprehend the various underlying aspects between place and people. The study of place memories is implicitly related to nostalgic places and provides understanding through both attachment as well as detachment.

Philosopher Edward Casey questions how often a memory is either of a place or of an event or person in a place and explains the place-bound quality of memories, though the degree of relevance/ significance may vary with individuals (Casey, 2000). Place memories are potentially significant in offering valuable insights for the study of aspects of people's self-identity, as they possess a profound intimacy with self, rich with lived experiences of everyday lives.

5.1.1 Methodology

A preliminary study with 36 participants (Fig. 5.2) involving people from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds was carried out to understand the perceptions and attitudes of people towards nostalgic places and unearth their associative links with the city. The age group of the participants was in the range of 25–65. The study involved in-depth structured interviews as explained in Chapter 3 of the methodology section.

The interview initially started off with an attempt to gauge a broad overview of resident's perception of their city through their nostalgic associations with a place. Baker and Kennedy (1994) suggest that there are three levels of nostalgic associations based on levels of emotional intensity which are experienced with each: real nostalgia—symbolic of time with direct experience; simulated nostalgia—symbolic of time with no direct experience; and collective nostalgia—symbolic of culture, nature and generation (Baker & Kennedy, 1994). For this study, real nostalgia has been considered, meaning, where a participant has actually lived through a particular event.

The second stage of the interview was focussed on the lived experiences of the respondents. Both the stages aimed at gradually taking a respondent's responses and observations from a tangible to an intangible aspect of place memory. The collected data was analysed to make significant observations on attachments to a place, narratives, engagement with a place, dependence on a place, historical knowledge of a place, urban reminders, collective memory and invariants. The study helped in understanding the underlying concept of how people connect with a place, their self and others.

The first stage of the interviewing focussed on comprehending tangible and intangible factors of a place which enhance intimacy between people and place. The task given to the participants was to identify aspects of the city which captures their relationship with the city. The choice was not limited to only immediate settings such as the home, but also to places of transitional quality. On identification of the various aspects/elements, the participants were asked to describe them. The participant's description included various aspects of the physical settings of the place, quality of experiences, reciprocity of relationship between the various chosen elements and the respondent.

The second stage of the interview was aimed at comprehending the lived experience of the respondents based on their responses in Stage I in a bid to understand engagement of people in places and their relation with the built environment. The aspects of attachment as well as detachment were explored through the third question, which aimed at an objective response from the respondents based on their lived experiences.

The main aim of data collection was to uncover the implicit and explicit aspects of a place which encourage or discourage meaningful engagement with a place.

5.1.2 Inferences

The residents' construct of Guwahati is deeply rooted in the representational spaces and the spatial practices revolving around the Kamakhya Temple and the Brahmaputra river. Figure 5.1 shows the word cloud formulated on the basis of the ten words that came to the mind of the participants when they were asked to think of the essence of the city. The word cloud was formulated on the basis of the views of the participants and the size of each word corresponds to their frequency of reference of the word by the participants.



Figure 5.1: Wordcloud showing residents' perception of Guwahati

From the word cloud and sample interview one can observe that the intangibles and temporalities of the city are as important as the physical elements of the city. These preliminary interviews helped in anticipating the associative links between people and place which helped in the formation of the questionnaire for the main case study.

The semi-structured questionnaire for the main case study required selection of samples for interviewing. A broad spectrum of people across different roles was sampled, and a total of 43 samples were conducted with the devotees, along with interviews with the stakeholders during Ambubachi mela. Similarly, for Chhath Puja, 36 samples were selected for the interviews following similar considerations for maintaining diverse occupational background and gender.

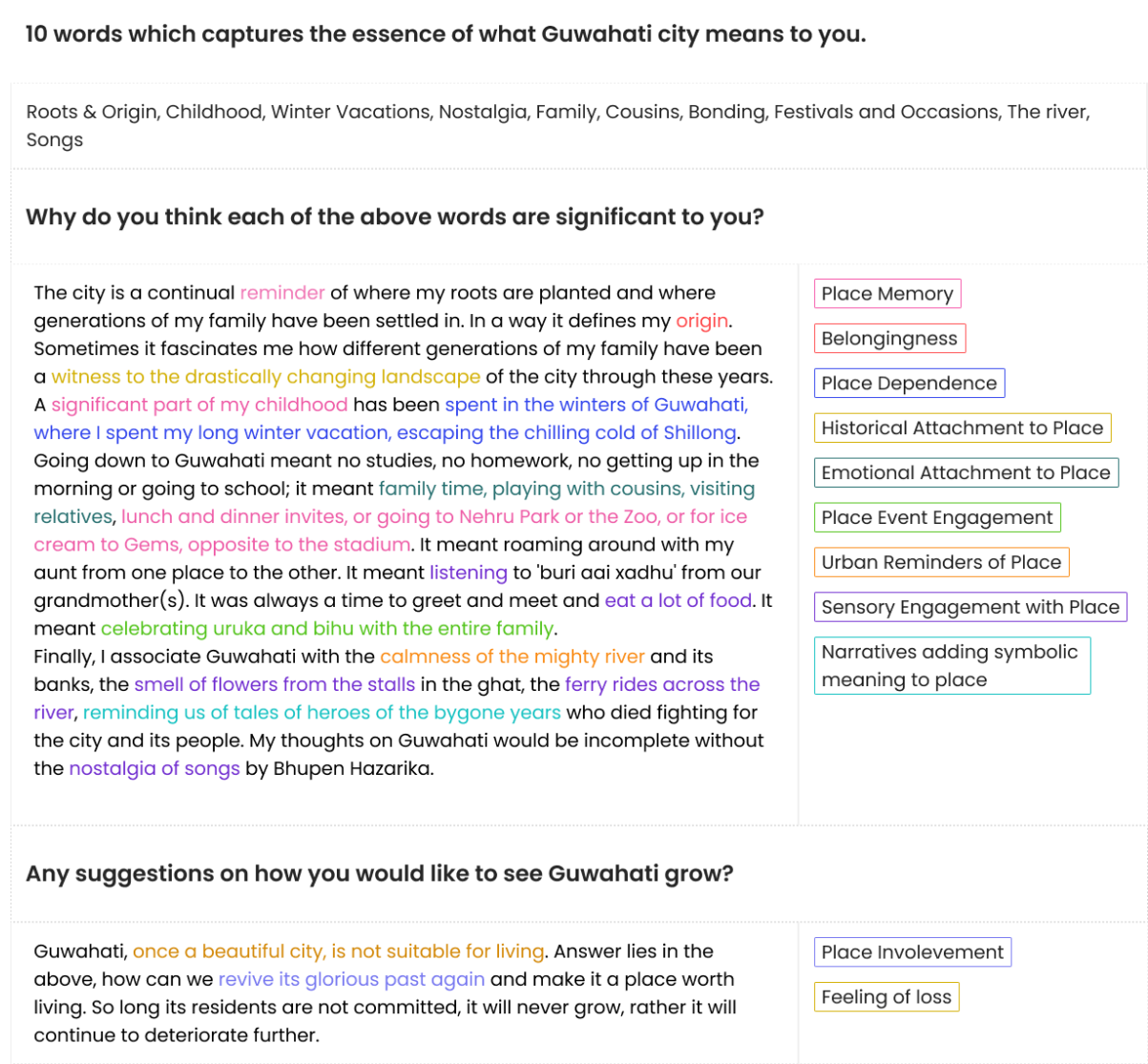


Figure 5.2: Sample of transcribed answers during preliminary semi-structured interview

5.2 The participant’s perspective on the selected cases

This section aims to deal with the perspectives of the participants of the selected cultural event spaces in the city of Guwahati. The participants comprise of the audiences who participated to

experience the events. A participant is one of the direct stakeholder groups within the larger public groups which includes various government bodies, financial institutions, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders (Greg & Palmer, 2012). Based on the preliminary interviews conducted in Guwahati where the interviewees were asked to think about the essence of the city, the contextual evidence under fourteen factors were identified under the construct of Place Identity. These preliminary interviews helped in getting an overview of the associated links between people and place. As discussed in Chapter 2, cultural event spaces are celebrated in the existing everyday spaces and create a collective narrative in the consciousness of the place and the participants due to their recurring nature despite their temporality. Thus, based on the interpretations from the preliminary interviews on place perception, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants to evaluate their perception of the cultural event spaces under study.

This section provides a detailed insight into the participant's perception of the two cultural event spaces under the fourteen aspects of place identity construct identified through literature. Semi-structured interview guided by these fourteen aspects was conducted with an attempt to decipher people-place-event associations formed due to each factor. The transcripts were then analysed by extracting relevant keywords and phrases based on the fourteen processes used for formulating the guiding questions. These keywords and phrases were then analysed further to understand the attributes of cultural event spaces contributing to place identity.

5.2.1 Distinctiveness making sense of place

To understand the participant's perspectives of the distinctiveness imparted by the two festivals under study, the interviewees were asked to describe the distinct aspects of the festivals that they have observed and experienced. The distinctiveness relating to the festivals under study were found to be very different. While the unique blend of nature and tantrism formed the essence of Ambubachi Mela, the composite shared culture of Chhath Puja gave it a distinct character.

5.2.1.1 Ambubachi Mela: "The cradle of Tantra"

In the present global scenario, people are not just confined to their own community and city and travelling has become an indispensable aspect of one's life. Thus, people have become

conscious not just of their personal environments but the places that they have visited continuously over time. It was observed from the interviews that the participants of the Ambubachi Mela had a lot of observations related to the distinctiveness of the festival and eventually the city of its manifestation, Guwahati. This has created a unique sense of place among the participants.

The participant's perception of the city is mostly dominated by the intangibles of the city, such as places of celebration. The natural beauty of the hills surrounding the Kamakhya Temple, the flamboyant tantrics from all over the world, Sadhus, Sanyasis, the huge number of devotees, the festive fervour, all come together to create a visual spectacle. Ambubachi Mela is being promoted by the Assam state government both as a key form of 'cultural heritage' and a vital economic resource with promotional billboards displaying the message "The cradle of Tantra" to signify the essence of the Mela (Fig. 5.3). The rare combination of natural beauty and the exotic culture of Tantrism, is what the participants of the festival unanimously expressed as the representational distinct characteristics of the event space.

As one participant recalls, *"I am a regular at many holy fairs across India. I have visited them all - Kumbh Mela, Joydeb Mela, Ganga Sagar Mela, you name it and I have been there. But there is no divine feeling like coming to visit Maa (Kamakhya deity)."*



Figure 5.3: Promotional Poster for Ambubachi Mela, Guwahati
(Source: Department of Tourism, Assam)

5.2.1.2 Composite shared culture of Chhath Puja

As crowds throng the streets and make way to their site of worship while carrying various sizes of offerings on their heads, a religious fervor is palpable during Chhath Puja. The participant's perception of the festival is primarily dominated by the intangibles of the festival such as the various rituals followed during the festival. Spatially, distinctiveness is perceived by the participants as the various spatial practices observed in the sites of worship. The *ghats* spread across the Brahmaputra river come alive with the devotees offering their prayers and *prasada* to the Sun God, while sparkling with brightly lit earthen lamps (Fig. 5.4). A canopy made of five sugarcane sticks signifying the *Pancha mahabhutas* (5 elements, that is, earth, water, air, fire, ether) as the primal source of human existence is constructed on the ghats. The lighted lamps are kept under the canopy and signify the sun sustaining life. The food offered as *prasada* is very unique to this festival. The process followed to prepare the food requires special arrangements such as cooking on earthen ovens called 'chulhas' and in bronze or clay vessels. As such, Chhath Puja is considered by many as an eco-friendly festival.



A. Devotees offering *Sandhya arghya* during Chhath Puja celebrations at the banks of Uzaanbazaar Ghat, Guwahati



B. Chhath Puja *prasada* at the banks of Uzaanbazaar Ghat, Guwahati

Figure 5.4: Ritual of *Sandhya arghya* and offerings during the festival of Chhath Puja in Guwahati (Image source: Author)

People from other cultures and religions also celebrate Chhath Puja, as one participant aptly explains, “*It isn’t about religion but about faith.*” Thus, what makes this festival truly distinct

is this composite shared culture among families, other cultures and faiths, as people from diverse backgrounds come together to celebrate this festival creating a sense of ‘empathetic insideness’ (Relph, 2008) amongst the participants.

5.2.2 Sensory engagement with place

The literature review establishes the influence of sensory engagement of a place on Place Identity. The participants were asked to narrate their observations of the various sensory experiences in the festivals under study. They were then analysed through the lens of the five sensual aspects to arrive at the various attributes of the festival that contribute towards sensory engagement with the event place.

5.2.2.1 Ambubachi Mela in a picturesque landscape

Situated atop the Nilachal hills, the site of Ambubachi Mela is the historic Kamakhya temple. The forests adorning the path to the temple, the view of the Brahmaputra below, and the Guwahati city spread out; the visual characteristics of the festival site dominates every other sensory experience and enhances the magnitude of this sensory experience of the festival. This experience is heightened as one traverses uphill to the temple complex with various informal vendors displaying their wares alongside the huge fair organised during this period. Displaying wares ranging from various food items, idols of deities, ornaments and trinkets, puja related items and other similar knick knacks, enriches the feel of the place by artfully engaging all of the senses: the feel of movement through space, warmth, or cold; the sound of music and blowing of conch shells; the smell of burning essence and flowers; the taste of food; the sight of costumes and colour, blended by the imagination into an unusual experience. During Ambubachi Mela, the festive setting of the festival transports one to a surreal experience. As emotions are heightened, these event spaces gain special importance as sites for collective memory and attachment.

5.2.2.2 Chhath Puja as a myriad of experiences

The bank of the Brahmaputra comes alive with the throng of devotees, the decorated temporary stalls, brightly illuminated with earthen lamps, while the streets come alive as spaces of performance of rituals as devotees walk towards the river banks. One can observe devotees, sometimes including small children, rolling on the ground and even on the streets while making

a wish. This ritual is called *Buniya Bari*. The representation of the rituals thus manifest in the spatial settings of the everyday spaces. The very essence of this festival relies on all the sensory engagements and in some instances, the abstinence of some of the senses during the *vrata* or fasting ritual . The festival is based on the idea of cleansing the body and mind and the surroundings where the rituals are carried out. The *prasada* including offerings such as sweets, rice porridge, Thekua (a traditional hard cake prepared with wheat and jaggery), the smell of incense and burning of earthen lamps dominate the olfactory and gustatory perception of the participants. The profusion of colours in the brightly decorated stalls, adorned with flowers, and sometimes with other symbolic representations such as the replica of the Sun God, or Chhathi Maiya, the Sun Temple of Konark, (Das et al., 2017) to name a few, are a visual treat for the participants. The haptic senses are enhanced as one takes a dip in the waters of the river, the feel of movement of the crowd, the act of offering *arghya* while pouring water and milk from outstretched palms, enriching the sense of shared collective experience which is an intrinsic aspect of the mela experience. The sound of *bhajan* and *kirtan* by performers along with the chanting of *mantras* by the devotees add to the auditory perception of the participants. These sensory aspects thus play a significant role in imparting a sense of collective identity to the participants and general sense of *communitas*.

5.2.3 Continuity through invariants of event places

Through the interview, the participants' perception of the aspects of the festivals which have retained their essence since time immemorial was probed. The purpose was to gain understanding of the specific aspects of the festivals that have helped in place continuity and people's continued association with the place. In both the cases under study, it was observed that even though the manifestation of the festival has changed over time, the essence of the festivals has remained intact playing a significant role in Place Identity.

5.2.3.1 The deep reverence of goddess Kamakhya as the invariant of Ambubachi Mela

The essence of the Ambubachi Mela, since at least the eighth century, lies in the celebration of the creative power of the goddess Kamakhya and as one of the most important of the *Shakti peethas* (seat of power) in the region of SouthEast Asia. Celebrated with the onset of monsoon in the month of late June, Ambubachi celebrates the annual menstruation of the goddess, whose

blood is believed to have the power to bring life to earth, just as the rains (ambu) bring life and fertility to the earth. The enduring significance of the reigning deity of Kamakhya Temple play a pivotal role in safeguarding the intrinsic character of the Ambubachi festival. ‘The Cradle of Tantra’ as promoted by government bodies for tourism and economic development ties to a broader attempt to connect the *peethas* to a collective identity (Ramos, 2017). In the last several years, enormous efforts have been undertaken to develop the festival as a centre of ‘religious and spiritual tourism’.

As the head of Bordeuri Samaj, Kamakhya temple observes,

“The objective of Ambubachi Mela was to devote oneself to the worship of Goddess Kamakhya which required meditation and sanctity of the mind. With the involvement of various organisations and availability of free food, accommodation, free transportation, it has been observed that devotion is not the primary focus which attracts the visitors. This mela creates an opportunity for many visitors to partake in the various facilities that this mela provides during that period. Despite this, the Sanyasis and Sages who visit this mela still observe fast during this period, which was the original way of displaying one’s devotion to Kamakhya Devi. This has led to the character of a fair to this festival.”

However, despite the changes brought about by modern times and a very long and active tradition of visitation by lakhs of devotees to the Kamakhya Temple during Ambubachi mela, the inherent nature of this sacred complex has hardly changed over the centuries (R. P. B. Singh & Kinsley, 2010).

5.2.3.2 Continuity of rituals and traditions as the invariants of Chhath Puja

The women play a pivotal role in carrying forward the rituals and traditions during Chhath Puja. The women, especially the mother of the household, performs the rituals, though in some instances, if the mother is unable to perform the puja, some men also perform the austerities to keep the traditions alive. There is a strict adherence to guidelines related to the performance of the puja. If for some reason, other than death, the celebration of the puja is discontinued, it cannot be resumed again, thereby sanctifying this ritual. It is also a belief among devotees that the huge *Prasada* basket (Fig. 5.5) carried by the men on their head should never fall off as it signals severe consequences in the following year. The preparation of the *prasada* also follows

age-old methods of cooking in traditional earthen ovens called *chulhas* and using mango wood as fuel. In some instances though, the *chulhas* have been replaced by modern cooking devices. However, the ritual of consuming only *satvic* food items which are considered pure during the fast is still followed. The river plays an equally important role in the performance of the festival. Without the presence of water, the performance of the ritual of *arghya* would not be possible. Though in places without a river, devotees also congregate in ponds and similar water bodies. Thus the traditions are passed down to generations, keeping the essence of the festival intact and reinforcing the collective identity of the community.

5.2.4 Historical Knowledge of the event

The interview with the participants tried to understand the participants' awareness of the historical background of the festivals under study. In the case of Ambubachi Mela, the answers revealed the diverse elements of historical significance which were situated in and around the precinct of the Kamakhya Temple complex. While the festival of Chhath Puja was considered as part of the historical narrative passed down through generations.



Figure 5.5: Devotee carrying the bamboo *Prasada* basket (Image source: Author)

5.2.4.1 Ambubachi Mela

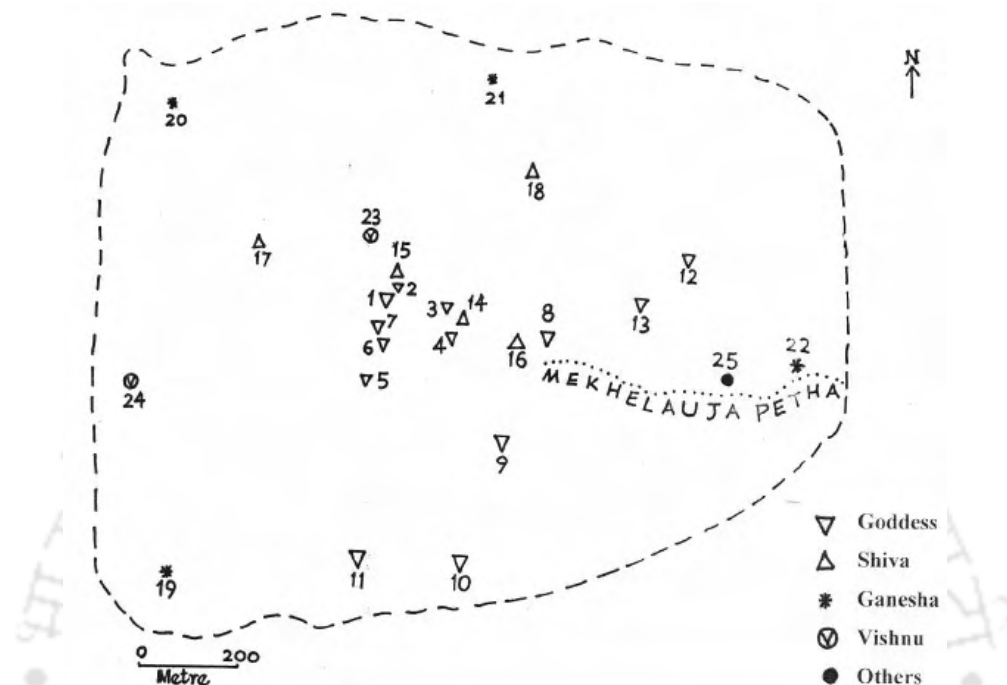
The narratives around Kamakhya Temple were the focal point of all the answers of the participants' perception of the history of Ambubachi Mela. Most of the participants were

conversant with the history of celebration of the festival as they were either repeat participants since many years, or their forefathers have been regular at the mela or by word of mouth through their friends and other family members who have participated previously. The representation of space of the mela binds together the various spatial elements of sacred space and mythological narratives. Since ancient times, the Kamakhya Temple has been well connected along the four cardinal directions which was traditionally built by Naraka. These were non motor able roads and could be accessed only on foot. On the east was the Mekhela-ujuwa path which was the one most frequently used in the earlier days. It is a popular belief that devotees who accessed this path would be blessed with success in life. On the northern side was the Syargadyara path which connected from Pandunath to Kamakhya Temple and this path is believed to bring salvation. The western path is believed to bring good luck in property whereas the southern path was believed to bring bad luck. Even in present times, the northern path and the Eastern path are used by pilgrims. The Nilachala hill also comprises many other sacred places of historical and spiritual importance (Fig. 5.5) which come into prominence among the devotees as these sites are used as accommodation sites apart from the Ashrams. Thus the spatial practices and representation of spaces have made the participants aware of the history of the event place.

5.2.4.2 *Chhath Puja: A non-native festival*

The participants' awareness of the historical origin of Chhath Puja celebrations is rooted in the narratives shared over generations. The origin of Chhath Puja can be traced to Sun worship in India. The *Chhath Vrata* is the most significant form of sun worship in Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh or wherever the people from these regions have migrated to (Saran & Pandey, 1992)). . With the advent of the railways and waterways, people from Bihar and nearby states migrated to Guwahati in large numbers and gradually settled in various areas of the city. Thus the rituals of celebration of Chhath Puja were carried over from their place of origin imparting new meanings and functions to their city of migration with changes in cultural practices. Over time, this non-native festival of Guwahati has found its own spatial manifestation in the physical urban fabric of the city which can also be attributed to the recent cultural emergence visible in many other Indian cities. Thus the cultural manifestation of the festival is now a part of the city's history and is thus significant in connecting the community to its roots. The ghats of the Brahmaputra acting representational spaces for the performance of the festival, along with the

representation of space through the planning of the festival, enabled people to understand the historical connect of the festival to the city as parts of a collective whole.



1. Kamakhya 2. Tara, 3. Kali, 4. Chhinnamasta, 5. Shitala, 6. Bhairavi, 7. Dhumavati, 8. Shmashanakali, 9. Lalitakanta, 10. Joydurga, 11. Vanadurga, 12. Bhubaneshvari, 13. Bagala, 14. Kameshvara, 15. Kedara, 16. Siddheshvara, 17. Amritokeshvara, 18. Kotilinga, 19. Ganesha (Mahakala), 20. Ganesha (Nandi), 21. Ganesha (Bhringi), 22. Ganesha (Ganapati), 23. Gadadhara, 24. Pandunath, 25. Betala.

Figure 5.6: Distribution of sacred shrines on Nilachala (*Image source: Singh, 2011*)

5.2.5 Narratives adding symbolic meaning to place

On probing the participants on their knowledge of the narratives of the festivals, it was observed that each of these festivals was replete with many narratives. While the Ambubachi Mela was steeped in symbolism, Chhath Puja embodied the community rituals of the participants.

5.2.5.1 Ambubachi Mela: Symbolism, Legends, Narratives and concept of sacrifice

Ambubachi Mela, celebrated in one of the oldest and most revered centres of Tantric practice in South Asia, is rooted in narratives and finds mention in the Kalika Purana, one of the oldest

Sakta sacred texts. The mythic narratives around the origins of Kamakhya (Fig. 5.7) combine several key themes central throughout South Asian Tantric traditions with ‘sacrifice’, ‘blood’ and ‘power’ being the common threads amongst them (Urban, 2019). According to the legends found in various retellings in the Puranas and Brahmanas, goddess Sati, the daughter of Daksha, was married to Lord Shiva. However, due to his disapproval of his son-in-law, Shiva, Daksha did not intentionally invite him to a Yagna he had arranged for a large sacrificial ritual. Sati considered this as an insult to her husband, and took her life by throwing herself into the sacrificial fire. Upon hearing the news of the demise of his wife, Shiva flew into a rage and destroyed the sacrifice while beheading Daksha, replacing his head with a goat’s head - the original sacrificial animal - thus making Daksha the ironic victim of his own Yagna. It is mentioned in the epics that Siva danced a dance of destruction called ‘Tandava’ in his fury. The intensity of Shiva’s fury was so overwhelming that it took several Gods to pacify his anger. In the midst of this struggle, Sati’s corpse accidentally got dismembered into 51 parts by the disc in the hands of Lord Vishnu and her female ‘genitalia’ or ‘Yoni’ fell on the spot where Kamakhya temple stands today (Mishra, 2004).

The earliest reference of the festival of Ambubachi comes from the Devi Bhagavata Purana (eleventh century). It is mentioned here that Vishnu made love to goddess Earth by assuming his boar (Varaha) incarnation for a year of the gods (360 human years). At the end of their dalliance, Vishnu worshipped goddess Earth and declared that she would be honoured on several auspicious occasions “On the day the Ambubachi ceremony closes, when laying the entry at the start of building a house, at the start of digging a well, and tilling the soil, everyone should worship you with wine, etc.’ (Devi Bhagavata Purana). The same text also associates Earth’s menstrual cycle to the peetha of Kamakhya. Such narratives roped together to form a narrative when reenacted annually significantly impacts participants’ belief system. The spatial elements in the narrative gain significance during the celebration of the festival. Such narratives can bridge space and time and enhance the collective consciousness of the attendees. By layering the festival with additional meanings, such narratives act as agents of collective memory. These narratives of the event passed on through storytelling, oral traditions, text, poems, etc. play a significant role in fostering a sense of cultural insideness for the resident participants and empathetic insideness for non-resident participants.



Figure 5.7: Kamakhya, a modern pictorial representation. (R. S. Singh, 2011)

5.2.5.2 Chhath Puja: A rich narrative of mythology

As observed in every other festival in India, Chhath Puja traverses rich narratives of mythology and legends. Chhath Puja finds references in both the Epics and Puranas. In the Ramayana, it is mentioned that Sita observed *Chhath vrata* (fasting) on returning to Ayodhya after *Deepaali* (Diwali). According to the narrative, Sita was blessed with twins soon after as she had steadfastly observed all the norms and rituals during her vrata. In the Mahabharata, there is a significant incident of the Lac house or *Lakshagraha*. It is mentioned here that Duryodhana hatched a plan to set fire to the highly inflammable Lac (wax) house where the Pandavas were residing along with their mother Kunti during the annual festival in the city of Varnavrata. However, the plan was foiled and the Pandavas escaped unscathed from the incident. Later, Kunti observed *Chhath vrata* after their escape from the *Lakshagraha*. It is also believed that Karna, the son of *Surya* (Sun God) also observed *Chhath Puja* which bestowed him with powers, symbolising the worship of Sun as deity with courage and prosperity. In many other cultures in India, sun worship is considered a homage for the bountiful harvest, marriages and birth. The rituals observed during the festival are a representation of these narratives. Intricately woven into the sequence and performance of the rituals, these narratives enhance the collective

consciousness of the people participating in the festival. The present day narratives are also infused with stories of people who have migrated to Guwahati from their native place in Bihar, eastern Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand. As these stories unfold, through the various rituals of chanting mantra, and people offering their *arghya* to the setting and rising sun the following day, the sense of solidarity and collective unity is enhanced.

The ability of the event to exist as parts of different narratives over different space and time and still being able to contribute to the whole is an important aspect which aids the holistic understanding of the event.

5.2.6 Historical attachment to cultural events

In all the case studies, the participants have been celebrating these festivals over generations or had participated for a substantial amount of time to develop associative ties with the various facets of the festivals. In the case of Ambubachi Mela, the participants discussed the significance of the core as adding layers of meaning to the entire city. In the case of Chhath Puja, the participants discussed the significance of the festival as spaces for diverse experiences and forming associations with the place of its manifestation.

5.2.6.1 Ambubachi Mela: Significance of the historic core

The history of Ambubachi Mela is shrouded in layers of mythical narratives and the participants' continuous engagement over years and generations have imparted layers of meanings to this event. Many participants of this festival belong to various other states in India and other foreign countries apart from the residents of the city. However, over time, their deep association with the event is not just bound by place boundaries but transcends space itself as their understanding of the sacred space and the mythological narratives play a definite central role in this process of perception. These relationships, though mythical, are manifested in the form of spatial practices of rituals of the festival. Many of the respondents mentioned about the *tantric* traditions of the festival around the themes of sacrifice, blood and power. There is another tangent to the historical narratives which follows the nationalist movements across Northeast India. In 1847, Assam was separated from Bengal by the British as to move to subdue the rising anti-British movement spreading across these regions. In response, many Bengalis began to strongly assert the connection between the two regions, highlighting their cultural,

linguistic and religious links with Assam; links embodied above all in peethas such as Kamakhya:

“The renewed interest in the Shakti Pithas as symbolic of the motherland was a clear response to the colonial fragmenting of territory.... Establishing a relationship between Bengal and Assam (and the rest of India) was crucial to the Bengali literati’s anti-imperialist discourse. They sought to transcend the cartographic boundaries imposed by the British by uniting these...neighbouring territories, emphasising their shared culture, especially through pilgrimage sites (Ramos, 2017, p. 59)”

Thus, the associative ties formed over years of interaction with the Ambubachi Mela has helped form an exclusive representational image of the festival for each participant. The various temples scattered atop the Nilachal hill, the ponds or *Satpukhuris* and the *Ashrams* for the various devotees and sadhus, each with their own significance tied people to these places.

5.2.6.2 Chhath Puja: Diverse opportunities to form people-place ties

The festival of Chhath is a celebration of gratitude and thankfulness to the life giving Sun God, *Surya* and also for seeking fulfilment of one’s wishes. People gather around designated ghats and water bodies to observe the rituals of the festival. The entire family takes turns to offer their *arghya* to the *Surya* and *Chhathi Maayi* (Chhath deity). As numerous people congregate to partake in the activities, the scene resembles nothing less than a carnival. When asked, many participants recalled incidents around the festival and their unique experiences around it, while many narrated tales of their wishes being fulfilled. The participants were historically attached to the river Brahmaputra due to the manifestation of the various narratives associated with the festival on the banks of the river. The roads leading upto the site of the festival, which also became spaces for performance of *Buniya Bari* or prostration march (Fig. 5.8), holds a special significance for the devotees.

The ghats spread across the river connects many places of historical importance such as the old city centre of Fancy Bazaar, Uzan Bazaar, Bharalumukh, and other areas of spiritual significance such as Basistha Ashram, Pandu Ghat among others, which enriches people-place ties the performance of rituals in these spaces. Thus the participants’ historical attachment to

the festival spaces in the city is through the representational spaces of the festival as well as the surrounding everyday spaces in the city.



Figure 5.8: Devotees of Chhath Puja performing *Buniya Bari* (prostration march) in Guwahati
(Image source: Author)

5.2.7 Emotional Attachment to place

The dynamic relationship between a place and an individual defines their emotional bonding with a place. In the case of Ambubachi Mela, a feeling of loss could be perceived from the participants' responses, while in Chhath Puja, emotions ran deep through nostalgic associations with place memories.

5.2.7.1 The changing nature of Ambubachi Mela

In recent times, and especially since the year 2014, Ambubachi Mela has witnessed an immense surge in participants. This popularity of the festival can be attributed to the intense promotion by various official agencies as a part of tourism and economic development of North east India. As such, participants of the festival who have been witness to these changes are sensitive towards these changes. While some of them rejoiced at the new developments that had happened around the festival, many others expressed their anguish as they felt the very essence of the festival had been tarnished. As one respondent, who is a Tantric initiate and a resident

complains, *“the spiritual core of Ambubachi has basically been lost due to the blatant consumerism and crass festival displays. I usually avoid visiting the temple when there are hordes of tourists on the festival days and prefer to wait until the place has quietened down to perform my pujas at the hill’s various temples.”* Another respondent who has been associated with the preservation of the temple’s traditions, laments that the original form of the Mela has essentially been destroyed and replaced by a tourist spectacle. An array of sleek billboards advertising the temple as ‘The Cradle of Tantra’(Fig. 5.9) and other similar messages greet people once they enter the city setting the tone for the experience of the festival. The tangible changes such as billboards, scale and magnitude of the festival inform the intangible changes, such as cultural changes due to exposure to these tangible changes. These changes to the representational spaces of the festival have eventually influenced the essence of the festival. Many new socio-economic practices have also cropped up such as converting the residences of the *pandas* and local residents into guesthouses to accommodate the pilgrims arriving for the Mela or postponing school exams due during that period to a later time. Many of these changes are due to the various authorities controlling the representation of space. Though change is always inevitable, a sensitive approach is essential to understand people’s emotional attachment towards places and the effect of the changes on people-place-event associations.

5.2.7.2 Transmutative visual culture of Chhath Puja

The celebration of Chhath Puja in the urban spaces of Guwahati has grown manifold over time. A myriad of new ways of manifestation of the festival could be observed over time as participants recall. A proliferation of temporary stalls, usually made from bamboo and decorated with marigold flowers, adorned the Kasomari ghats of Brahmaputra in Guwahati. What stood out was the blatant display of stalls with ornamental elements such as Greek colonnades, replicas of famous Indian temples, symbolic representation of the Sun God, intricate flower decorations, bright colours apart from displays of popular culture lending a certain flair of ‘spectacularisation’ to the entire festival (Fig. 5.10). Economical and media agents have also forayed into the celebration of this festival where an artificial Sun was installed on the banks of Brahmaputra. Named the ‘Sun of Change’ (Fig. 5.11), around 200 halogen lights have been assembled on a large bamboo structure at a height of over 60 feet, in a circular shape, resembling the sun.

A change in the representational space due to changing visual culture of the festival represents the influence of hybrid cross cultural signs while also paradoxically celebrating indigenous traditions and sentiments. Appropriated and borrowed from various other cultures, such visual motifs are presented as spectacle for the participants. They serve as a powerful mirror of the current tastes and influences and represent the ethos of the modern culture of the non-native community and their presence in the city.



Figure 5.9: Billboards adorning the roads of Guwahati, Ambubachi Mela, June 2017 (*Image Source: Author*)

5.2.8 Place dependence

The concept of place dependence was explored to understand participants' dependence on a place based on the potential of the place to fulfil their needs and aspirations in a particular physical setting and understand their association with that place or other similar functioning settings. In the case of Ambubachi Mela, the place dependency was spread across the surrounding areas around the Kamakhya Temple, which played an equally important role in the performance of the festival. While in Chhath Puja, the physical setting of the event space

was a very integral aspect for the performance of the festival. The spatial practices in both the cases, contributed the most to the associative ties formed by place dependence.



Figure 5.10: Temporary installations depicting a various representations of symbolic cultural elements and intricately ornamented with flowers and lights during Chhath Puja, Guwahati, 2017 (Source: Author)



Figure 5.11: ‘Sun of Change’ installation in Kachomari Ghat, Chhath Puja, 2017

5.2.8.1 Ambubachi Mela: Dependency on the surrounding areas

The festival of Ambubachi draws millions of participants from all over the world. As such, there is spillage of the festival spaces to the surrounding spaces in the city in the form of

accommodation camps for the participants. Located at central locations of the city, and along the main access road running through the city, these auxiliary festival spaces are the most eventful places of the city during the festival of Ambubachi Mela. Accommodating all kinds of activities of the participants, these social spaces have been informed by the spatial practices as venues for festival celebration. These spaces though spread out across the city, eventually culminate at one focal point, the sacred temple complex. These spaces thus play a crucial role in fulfilling the needs of the participants of the festival. The participants' movement pattern on festival days is an indicator of the level of interaction they have with various parts of the event spaces and hence their attachment to such spaces.

5.2.8.2 Chhath Puja: Ghats as places of performance

The *ghats* of the Brahmaputra river have a very significant role in the celebration of Chhath Puja and as such was mentioned by most of the participants as a high dependency place. These *ghats* are the performance ground for conducting all kinds of activities related to the celebration of this festival. Located at various central locations of the city, these Chhath Puja ghats play a crucial role in establishing strong connections between these various zones. Encountering these places in the city during the celebration of Chhath Puja increases the associational value of the precincts. As such, the contribution of this stretch of Brahmaputra river in the formation of place attachment due to place dependence is significant.

5.2.9 Urban reminders of place

There are certain elements in the urban space that act as mnemonic devices to the city's past. By interviewing the participants, an attempt to understand the aspects of the festival event spaces which act as reminders of the past was carried out. Each of the cases under study, rich with narratives, myths and legends, acted as palimpsest of memories for the participants.

5.2.9.1 The tangible and intangibles as reminders of Ambubachi Mela

The site of celebration of the Ambubachi Mela at the historic Kamakhya Temple is replete with many elements that act as reminders of the past. The surrounding 10 temples or Dashamahavidya designating the ten manifestations of Kamakhya Devi or her ten special powers, the ponds or Satpukhuris/ Kundas in the Kamakhya Devalaya each with their own significance or the various Ashrams dotting the Nilachal hills, play a prominent role in the

formation of place identity through place memory. The Nilachal hill itself has a rich narrative around its origin. As per the legends, Naraka built the roads leading to the Temple. Each of the four cardinal directions leading to the temple has their own significance with many narratives and beliefs popular among the devotees. In present times, the connectivity to the temple has been enhanced with the construction of the 3km motor able road which is the prime mode of accessibility now. The top of the hill was densely populated prior to the plains which had inhabitants much later which signifies the growth pattern of the city. The temple grounds are scattered with sculptural pieces from the Pala era that act as reminders of the rich legacy of the temple. However, recent changes to the existing structure were carried out which had irked some of the older priests and *tantrikas*. These numerous elements, some as representations of space, by their presence aid in the formation of collective identity through their representational space.

5.2.9.2 The river as a reminder of city's narratives during Chhath Puja

The Brahmaputra river cutting across the city of Guwahati forms the site of performance of the various rituals associated with Chhath Puja. The various ghats of the river connecting numerous sites of importance in the city, act as reminders of the narratives of the city's past. The Kachomari Ghat, Fancy Bazar, Shukreshwar Ghat along the historic core of the city, spreading along the south towards Sunsali and towards Pandu in the north, reminds the participants of the significance of these places. Traditionally this festival is celebrated in parts of Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh. However in recent times, with mass migration of people from Bihar to other states has seen the proliferation of Chhath Puja in other states as well. As one participant observes, *"Though the festival is celebrated in the Gangetic belt primarily in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, the spontaneous participation of people across the country especially in Assam is indeed a testimony to Chhath festival's universal character."* As the festival gained momentum in recent years in Guwahati, more ghats have been added to the existing ones. Chhath Puja has been able to weave itself in the fabric of the city and thus has created new spaces in Guwahati. This festival has managed to create an existence in the socio-cultural environment of the city by crafting their identity and imprinting the same on the image of the city. Thus the representation of spaces as conceived by the district authorities earmarking certain ghats as 'places of worship' informs the spatial practice of these spaces and guides the representational space and the formation of the social space.

5.2.10 Place memory

The memories of experience in a place deeply influence people's association with places. Such memories can be both individual as well as collective in nature. The participants were probed to gain insights into formation of memory, either personal or collective as result of their interaction with the cultural events under study.

5.2.10.1 *Collective memory during Ambubachi Mela*

The festival of Ambubachi Mela provided diverse opportunities for experiencing the event at an individual as well as collective level. The Mela provided a setting for social interactions where people shared history of the festival and performed cultural practices collectively while constituting an arena for continuity through memories. The scenic road leading upto the temple complex remained etched in the memory of many respondents. The fair hosted near the temple precinct provided diverse opportunities to the participants to partake in collective activities. Participants also shared their experience of their stay at the various accommodation camps located at the various zones in the city. For many of the participants, a shared connectedness akin to a family was experienced as people shared their intimate spaces with their fellow participants. Such aspects of the festival spaces thus attributed a sense of collective memory among the participants as a result of the spatial practices as well as the representation of space.

5.2.10.2 *Memories of past experiences during Chhath Puja*

The sites of performance of the festival of Chhath Puja are located at various focal points of the city. During the celebration of the festival, these spaces come alive through the various socio-cultural practices and shared activities of the participants. The festival arena thus become a site for community revitalisation through the involvement of the participants in the various religious rites and rituals, display of faith and commerce, the performance of devotional and folk songs narrating stories around *Chhathi Maiya* and Sun God, the decorated stalls demarcated for the participants to perform *arghya* in the water and *prasada* prepared from the seasonal produce. Thus, the ghats act as reminders of memories of the varied experiences in the festival. As one participant recalls, *"I have fond memories of my childhood in these ghats. All the people from my neighbourhood used to load ourselves and the huge bamboo baskets of offerings onto these trucks that used to ferry us to the ghats. At the ghats, we all knew each other and there was no allocation of spaces as it happens now. Sometimes, I used to play around with my friends and*

miss the truck that had carried me there. But it never really posed any issue as I knew the people around me and where they lived. I could just get into any truck that was driving past my house with a neighbour. During the festival time, these ghats felt like an extension of my house and neighbourhood.” Thus the representation of space influences the spatial practices along with the representational space.

5.2.11 Spirit of a place

The spirit of a place is essentially the essence of the place consisting of tangible and intangible attributes. The participants were interviewed to understand the characteristics features which define the essence of the festivals under study. In both the cases of Ambubachi Mela and Chhath Puja, it was the sense of collective as opposed to the self that defined the true essence of both the events.

5.2.11.1 Spiritual and social relations as the underlying spirit of Ambubachi Mela

Most of the respondents emphasised on the deep spiritual significance of the entire experience of the Mela. One of them stated that *“Maa (Kamakhya deity) beckons us and we come here every year. All our wishes are fulfilled when we pray to Maa.”* Another participant mentioned that visiting Ambubachi Mela was *“one of his last wishes before his death.”* On a similar vein, most of the respondents spoke about devotion and how they feel rejuvenated when they come to this Mela. Another instance, wherein, the participants had a positive reinforcement of emotions was their connection with others. For many of the participants, meeting people is one of the major causes for their visit to this Mela. As one participant (interview no. 21) observes, *“Devotion is definitely a reason why I attend Ambubachi Mela, but getting to meet people here is what I consider fortunate. This is what keeps me coming back to the mela every year”*. Many of them commented how people behaved in a different manner while they were at the Mela. They became more courteous, more willing to help and more ready to trust their fellow pilgrims. Indeed, one could observe that people from different places lived in a harmonious manner under the same roof of the accommodations in the campsite. For many, such behaviour is rooted in their belief that their actions should be devoid of any negativity as they are all under the watchful eyes of the reigning deity at Kamakhya. Thus, one can assume that social relations with others are an integral aspect of their experience of the Mela and one which aids in the shaping of their collective social identity. The people attending the Mela were construed as

belonging to a community sharing distinct beliefs and values. This shared commonality was considered to be integral in establishing a sense of community, where even strangers were construed as someone sharing similar ideologies. Another aspect contributing to this sense of community was the simplistic life at the Mela (e.g., the relative absence and importance of material aspects). Such themes emerged when the respondents were probed on the aspects of the Mela promoting social relations. For participants attending the Mela for close to 5 or 6 years, it was a sense of familiarity that was akin to meeting family members. This sense of familiarity was not limited to only people that the respondents interacted with the most, but to the crowd of people visiting the Mela in general. The realisation of the participants of this intrinsic essence of the Mela in fostering a sense of community has helped in strengthening people-place-event associations and enhanced the collective identity of the individuals.

5.2.11.2 Chhath Puja: The essence of collective gratitude

Chhath Puja is a gathering of people who predominantly belong to the Bihari community. As such, this festival, rooted in age-old traditions and owing to its non-native nature, creates a separate space in the city for the performance of the festival. Retaining the essence of the festival thus has a significant role in influencing social and individual identity of the community. There is a sense of collective gratitude that pervades the mood during the festival of Chhath. As one of the respondents states, *“This festival gives us the opportunity to come home and be with our family. We celebrate all the rituals together as a family and as a community. We fast together, offer our arghya together, and distribute prasada to everyone around us.”* This aids in enhancing the sense of collective identity among the participants. As people of all castes and sometimes different faiths gathered at the banks of the river, this sense of collective belongingness was further enhanced through shared rituals, narratives around the festival and beliefs. Many participants also felt that the ancient roots of the festival was an essential aspect of the festival. This festival facilitated interactions that helped in the formation of an extended self, a social identity or a social self which could be deciphered from one respondent’s statement, *“This festival has been celebrated by our ancestors, and as such has old roots. We take pride in celebrating it and it has helped us to stay connected to each other even though we are no longer in our native state.”* The unique and traditional rituals around the worship of the Sun God and Chhathi Maiya, the folk songs narrating stories of the festival, the *prasada*, all become an arena for the cultural revitalisation of the community. The need to

be socially and culturally visible was also a significant aspect that resonated with many of the respondents. By being the meeting point for several generations, this festival became an arena that empowered the community in relation to their past, present and the future through narratives from the point of view of the participants. Thus, despite being a non-native festival, the celebration of Chhath Puja in the urban spaces of Guwahati has imparted it with a distinct social space producing the representational spaces in the city.

5.2.12 Place Event Engagement

Through the two festivals under study, the participants were interviewed about the various ways that they engaged in the festivals and the reasons behind such participation.

5.2.12.1 Ambubachi Mela: Venue for formal and informal interactions

During the festival of Ambubachi Mela, millions of pilgrims descended upon the city of Guwahati to celebrate this auspicious occasion. Due to the magnitude of Ambubachi Mela, the festival is not limited to only the spaces demarcated by the festival organisers, but spills over to the surrounding local areas as well. The flexible characteristic of event spaces encourages many formal and informal actions of the participants. Most of the interactions between the participants occurred at the accommodation camps which were among many other facilities provided by the festival organisers. These camps spread out across the city marked the presence of the festival in the everyday urban spaces of the city. One could observe certain outbursts of activities such as *baul* performance by a group of travelling *Baul* singers, or impromptu dance to the beat of traditional drums at these camp sites. Apart from these informal interactions, various formal interactions through the representation of space took place in the event spaces. One such instance was the performance of various cultural activities such as Bhajan recitals in the Sonaram High School field for the entire duration of the festival. With the congregation of a huge crowd, the emotions, memory and sensations are heightened as people and activities are confined in space and time. Such event-place engagements thus add layers of meaning to places. Through a diversity of actions, both formal and informal, the event spaces are inscribed and appropriated by the participants through the representational space.

5.2.12.2 Place engagement aiding in visibility of Chhath Puja

The Chhath Puja festival displays the manifestation of cultural roots externally on non-native grounds. Through the celebration of the various rituals along the numerous ghats of the Brahmaputra river, this festival has been able to weave itself in the everyday spaces of the city, thus lending them new layers of colour and vibrancy. Apart from the ghats and market spaces, the city streets transform temporarily as processional paths and act as spaces for performance of rituals of the festival. The interactions occur at various levels involving the event, space and people. The festival of Chhath Puja is highly sensorial, as discussed previously, and as such the engagement with the event is replete with a variety of experiences. Discussing with the participants, one could understand how the festive celebrations which are part of the house extends to the public display at the ghats where everyone congregates to celebrate. The sites of celebration being located at various important points across the city, the entire city witnesses these events and participates in it either actively or passively. The entire gamut of activities pertaining to the festival commences a few weeks ahead of the festival, starting with the cleaning of the ghats demarcated for the festival, followed by putting up temporary structures for safety purposes, and decoration of the puja stalls by the devotees, performance of the various activities and rituals at the ghats, all of which are carried out in the public domain. It could be inferred from the responses of the participants that the engagements with place episodes formed an integral aspect of people's association with a place and contributed significantly to their perception of Place Identity. Thus the highly representational nature of the event spaces contributed to place engagement and association of the participants which helped in producing the social spaces of the city.

5.2.13 Self-Esteem & Self-Efficacy

A positive reinforcement of the self in the context of a festival is possible only when the beliefs and aspirations of the participants are achieved due to their alignment with the festival's beliefs and values. The interview with the participants sought to analyse the aspects of the festival which aided in their feeling of self-esteem and self-efficacy.

5.2.13.1 Foregoing materialistic pleasures at the core of self-esteem and self-efficacy at Ambubachi Mela

The participants of Ambubachi Mela feel blessed to be a part of the sacredness of the festival. Many of them have travelled far and wide to be a part of this yearly event. This shows the high esteem they place on the festival. The site of the festival, Kamakhya Temple is one of the most revered *shakti peethas* in the country and central to the narrative of the city. The legends, myths, history around the temple and the festival have created this sense of pride among the devotees to be a part of this sacred-scape. The role of the crowd in shaping the feeling of self esteem and self efficacy at the Ambubachi Mela cannot be overlooked as it was the common thread of most of the responses given by the participants. As opposed to how crowds are seen as a menace in most situations, the feedback received from the participants of the interview were overwhelmingly positive. For many, the presence of the crowd provided a sense of support and a feeling of general trust. They also reveled in the various activities of others which gave them a sense of pleasure. As opposed to the social psychology notion of collective participation to bring out the worst in people, the research does not presuppose such assumptions and considers it purely from the empirical aspect. The Mela provided grounds to observe how collective experience maps out as social processes and practices that shape pilgrim's categorisations of themselves and their understandings of their social relationships with each other (J. C. Turner et al., 1987, 1994). There might also be instances of differences of experience and treatment as commonly observed in terms of gender and caste. This might lead one to assume that it will be an impediment to a sense of unity, self-esteem and collective identity of the crowd. This is where the difference of notion with western theorising plays out as many theorists think of nations in particular and groups in general as 'horizontal communities' (Anderson, 1983) in which everybody is treated equally and seen to be on the same level. Many devotees shared a similar ideology while for others these differences did not subvert the true meaning of the Mela, nor did it undermine the sense of oneness, self-esteem and self-efficacy. The festival of Ambubachi Mela provided a range of facilities for the devotees which contributed to their feeling of comfort especially for the devotees who have travelled away from their own place of origin. As the festival is spread over a week, such facilities were imperative to create a sense of belongingness with the festival. When enquired if they would reconsider visiting this festival again the next year in the light of the any problems faced by them, they unanimously responded in the affirmative. This highlights an interesting observation that the heightened sense of

celebration during festivals overshadows the lack of comfort and amenities as people demarcate such experiences from their everyday lives (Das & Das, 2021). This temporal dimension of festivals is an integral aspect that aids in the creation of mutual kinship thus transcending to their sense of identity. The Mela, in a wider context, also formed a social entity in the society. One such instance was the continuous loud music (featuring chanting, discourses on religion, bhajan, etc.) blaring from the loudspeakers in the Mela campsite. On most occasions such continuous intense sounds would be deemed aversive and function as an aggravator (Westman & Walters, 1981), but the participants had an alternate perspective altogether. They rejoiced in the sounds, comparing it akin to the flow of the river of knowledge and commented that it made everyone go into a state of devotion and spirituality unknowingly. Here, individuals felt valued, deserving of respect as compared to other crowded situations.

5.2.13.2 *Proud custodians of traditions*

Migration to urban areas plays an important role in the spread and confluence of ideas and philosophies, art and architecture, culture and politics, generating a new set of characteristics affecting the local culture, lifestyle, practices and urban space. Chhath Puja, despite being a non-native festival, has been able to claim its place in the urban fabric of the city and has added new meanings to the existing urban spaces. This festival has managed to create an existence in the social space of the city by crafting their identity and imprinting the same on the image of the city. By observing the visual culture of this festival, the attributes of “local” can be seen along with “global” coming together in a juxtaposition of cultural values and beliefs. By adapting this festival to the urban environment of Guwahati, transformation of the identity of the city can be observed as the city is exposed to new ideas and cultures. The participants of the festival reflected on the experience of the collective and the pleasure of seeing others who shared their beliefs. One respondent observed that seeing fellow participants provides “*confirmation that our traditions are alive*”. Another respondent on a similar vein observed that, “*Seeing old and young people participate in these traditions makes you feel a sense of pride of belonging to this community.*” Many others emphasise the aspect of connectedness they experienced with others. They experienced a sense of familiarity even though they might be strangers. This was inherent to their feeling of self-esteem and self-efficacy.

5.2.14 Place Involvement

The level of involvement that the participants experienced in the festivals was directly related to their level of identification. The participants were probed to understand the aspects of the festival promoting or obstructing their involvement with the event spaces. Their responses were analysed using Relph's seven levels of experiential involvement/identification in place.

5.2.14.1 Place involvement fostering loyalty

In the final stage of the interview, the participants' narratives were analysed to understand their modes of involvement with the *Mela*. Despite travelling far and wide to reach the venue of the *Mela*, leaving behind the safety and comfort of their homes, the participants spoke about enduring all the physical hardships and the fact that it did not hinder them from participating in the event. The participants were inquired regarding the experience of crowds. Most often, the responses were overwhelmingly positive with responses such as, "*The presence of others comes as a support to us. We love to interact with various people, sadhus and sanyasis.*" They often commented how the presence of others enhanced their experience of the *Mela*. Participants spoke of the sense of value and respect they received in their interactions with others. For many, there was an inherent sense of loyalty towards the festival, which could be inferred from their responses. One respondent commented that, "*If my health permits and Maa Kamakhya is willing, I will visit again next year with my family.*" It was observed that Existential Outsideness (complete alienation from the place), Objective Outsideness (deliberate distancing) and Vicarious Insideness (indirect experience of places) hardly occurred in the participants' narratives. Behavioural Insideness (deliberate experience) and Empathetic Insideness (empathy) primarily featured in their narratives. Vicarious Insideness (indirect experience) and Incidental Outsideness (place is just a backdrop) were absent in the interviews with the participants of the festival.

5.2.14.2 Chhath Puja fostering collective identity through collective involvement

The site of study is located in the ancient part of the city where there is an organic overlapping of the old and the new. The main artery of the city, M.G. Road runs parallel to the site whereas many formal and informal economic activities are carried out in the narrow lanes adjoining the main road. These chock-a-block lanes provide a wilderness of activities apart from being the site for this festival. Though these activities add to the vibrancy of the place, many activities

also create an undesirable environment. The bus stands at the various junctions of the road generate a lot of vehicular movement. Apart from that, vehicles carrying various goods compress the entire street leading to a lot of congestion. As such, the city bears witness to the celebration of the festival leading to myriad ways of formal and informal association with the event space. Many respondents commented on the hierarchy that has come into existence in these spaces in recent times. These include the allocation of space in the ghats and the amount charged for the same. For many respondents, this experience has overshadowed the essence of the festival. However there are also instances wherein, people have shared their space with their fellow devotees who have been unable to secure a decent spot at the ghats. Such interactions facilitate the feeling of shared community in the wider context of the social space of the city. In the response of the participants, it was observed that Existential Outsideness (complete alienation from the place), Objective Outsideness (deliberate distancing) and Vicarious Insideness (indirect experience of places) were not a part of people's event space involvement. Existential Insideness, Behavioural Insideness (deliberate experience) and Empathetic Insideness (empathy) primarily featured in their narratives of the participants. Vicarious Insideness (indirect experience) was also observed in the narratives of the participants who carried memories of celebration in their place of origin. Incidental Outsideness (place is just a backdrop) was absent as the interviews were aimed only for the participants of the festival.

5.3 Place Identity factors and their socio spatial relevance

This section reflects on how the experience of participants are integrated with the various aspects of the event spaces. The various tangible and intangible aspects such as site of event, rituals, activities, crowd, vendors, food, sense of community, etc, which collectively added to the participants' construct of identity. Based on the interpretations from the preliminary interviews on place perception, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants to evaluate their perception of the cultural event spaces under study. Forty-three interviews were conducted with the devotees and stakeholders during the Ambubachi mela and thirty-six interviews with the devotees and their families during Chhath Puja. The interview transcripts prepared from the participants' data collection were coded and interpreted using the IPA method (Table 5.1), allowing several themes to emerge, which were analysed for their socio-cultural and spatial relevance. The operative framework was used to decode the participants' perception

with an attempt to draw links between factors influencing Place Identity and their socio-cultural and spatial relevance to get a holistic understanding of the influence of each factor in the socio-spatial realm (Table 5.2 & Table 5.3).

Table 5.1: Emerging themes and their socio-cultural and spatial relevance using IPA

Socio cultural > Spatial	Equally socio cultural & Spatial	Spatial > Socio cultural
Religious needs	Display of artefacts having symbolic significance/Symbolic ritualistic objects	Significance of the site of the event
Nostalgic place memories	Performance of traditional rites and rituals in the event spaces	Visual & physical appeal of the event space (Natural landscape, the hill, forests, the river etc.)
Collective memory of event space	Familiarity through personal and collective experiences	Flexibility of space accommodating formal and informal actions
Collective experiences	Belongingness	Haptic experiences (movement through crowd, touching various wares sold by vendors, etc)
Social identity	Sense of efficacy while partaking in activities	Event spaces acting as urban reminders
Association with childhood memories	Sense of comfort & safety due to shared experience and interaction with others	Event spaces acting as invariants of place
Communitas	Sense of ownership	The auxiliary sacred spaces
Sense of collective solidarity and unity	Familiarity through repeat spatial experiences	Scale and magnitude of the festival
Collective consciousness	Shared collective engagement in space	New spaces added to existing event space
Sense of comfort & safety	Public displays of	Space flexibility to suit user's needs (Appropriation

due to previous familiar experiences	performance	of space by users)
	Spectacularisation of event spaces adding new layer of meaning	Spatial freedom of movement
	Sense of attachment with the various event spaces	Inside/Outside connectedness
	Existential insideness due to intense involvement with space	Openness and accessibility
	Behavioural insideness due to direct involvement with activities	Spatial manifestation of the festival
	Vicarious insideness due to nostalgic associations	Space promoting socio-cultural interactions
	Significance of the site of performance of the rituals	Platform for connecting with others
		Marking presence in the everyday urban space
		Event space promoting unselfconscious behavior
		Sense of loyalty due to previous place experience
		Place memory due to individual & collective experiences
		Visual & physical engagement in event spaces
		Event place attachment due to associations over time
		Space promoting socio-cultural interactions
		Familiarity through native

Table 5.2 : Interconnections with fourteen factors of PI and themes developed using IPA during Ambubachi Mela

Factors forming Place Identity	Socio-cultural > Spatial	Equally Socio-cultural & Spatial	Spatial > Socio-cultural
Place Meaning			
Distinctiveness making sense of place	• Rituals • Festive fervour • Cultural heritage	• Displays of spiritual message • The historic site of festival • Presence of crowds, flamboyant tantrics, etc.	• Natural landscape, the hill, forests, etc.
Sensory engagement with place	• Sound of traditional instruments (drums, conch shells, etc) • Smell of burning incense sticks, aroma of flowers • Collective memory	• The Mela/Fair • Visual characteristics (sight of costumes, colour, decorations, etc)	• Natural landscape, the hill, forests, etc. • The river • Informal spaces for vending • Haptic experiences (movement through crowd, touching various wares sold by vendors, etc)
Continuity through invariants of event places	• Spiritual reverence • Symbolic significance of the festival • Essence of the festival	• The temple • The crowd	• Site of festival
Historical Knowledge of the event	• Mythological legends • Through ancestors • Repeat participation in the event	• Historical artefacts	• Sacred places of historical and spiritual importance
Narratives adding symbolic meaning to place	• Agents of collective memory • Cultural insideness • Empathetic insideness • Collective consciousness	• Recollection of events in the narratives as per the legends	• Significance of the site
Place Attachment			
Historical attachment due to cultural events	• Continuous engagement over years and generations • Deep association transcending time and place	• Performance of traditional rites and rituals • Presence of tantrics	• The historic site of the festival • The auxiliary sacred spaces in the festival precinct
Emotional Attachment to place	• Feeling of loss due to socio-cultural changes • Sense of ownership • Spirituality leading to sense of connectedness • Sense of shared collective identity • Sense of belongingness	• Presence of large number of people • Festivalisation changing essence of the festival • Sense of privacy • Sense of safety • Familiarity through repeat spatial experiences	• Scale and magnitude of festival • New spaces added to existing event space • Space flexibility to suit users needs (Appropriation of space by users)

Factors forming Place Identity	Socio-cultural > Spatial	Equally Socio-cultural & Spatial	Spatial > Socio-cultural
Emotional Attachment to place	• Feeling of loss due to socio-cultural changes • Sense of ownership • Spirituality leading to sense of connectedness • Sense of shared collective identity • Sense of belongingness	• Presence of large number of people • Festivalisation changing essence of the festival • Sense of privacy • Sense of safety • Familiarity through repeat spatial experiences	• Scale and magnitude of festival • New spaces added to existing event space • Space flexibility to suit users needs (Appropriation of space by users)
Place dependence	• Sense of attachment with the various event spaces • Sense of comfort & safety due to shared experience	• Suitability for social activities and behaviour	• Spatial freedom of movement • Inside/Outside connectedness • Openness and accessibility
Urban reminders of place	• Narratives, legends adding meaning to event spaces	• Relics from past • Memory objects	• Site of the event due to historical importance • Auxiliary sites of spiritual prominence
Place memory	• Individual memory of event space • Collective memory of event space • Continuity • Shared connectedness	• Shared history • Socio-cultural activities	• Natural landscape elements • Monuments of historical importance
Spirit of a place	• Spirituality • Social relations • Devotion • Sense of belonging through shared commonality • Familiarity akin to family	• Unselfconscious behaviour • Relative absence and importance of material aspects	• The spiritual significance of the site of the event • Space promoting socio-cultural interactions • Space accommodating multiple needs of the participants
Place Experience			
Place Event Engagement	• Add meaning to space	• Performance of various impromptu activities • Performance of various planned activities • Heightened emotions, memory and sensations	• Platform for connecting with others • Flexibility of space accommodating formal and informal actions • Marking presence in the everyday urban space
Self-Esteem & Self-Efficacy	• Repeat participation due to sense of loyalty • Sense of pride due to belongingness • Collective experience defining social relations	• Sense of comfort due to presence of others • Sense of efficacy while partaking in activities • Event as a social entity	• Symbolic significance of the festival site • Foregoing material pleasures
Place Involvement	• Sense of comfort and safety through interaction with others	• Behavioural insideness due to involvement with the space • Empathetic insideness due to shared collective involvement	• Unselfconscious behavior • Sense of loyalty due to place experience

Table 5.3 : Interconnections with fourteen factors of PI and themes developed using IPA during Chhath Puja

Factors forming Place Identity	Socio-cultural > Spatial	Equally Socio-cultural & Spatial	Spatial > Socio-cultural
Place Meaning			
Distinctiveness making sense of place	• Prasada/Offerings/Food • Crowd • Empathetic Insideness • Diversity of participants	• Temporary structures for ritual performance • Festival site • Arghya/Rituals	• Temporary structures for safety measures • Vendor stalls • Decorations
Sensory engagement with place	• Ritual of fasting • Prasada/Offerings • Religious music (Bhajan, Kirtan, chanting of mantras) • Collective experience/Communitas	• Haptic engagement through streets as space for performance of rituals • Haptic engagement through river as site for ritual performance	• Visual engagement through decorated temporary stalls
Continuity through invariants of event places	• Adherence to traditions and rituals • Collective identity • Essence of the festival • Satvic food consumed during the festival	• Performance of rituals such as arghya	• The ghats as site of festival
Historical Knowledge of the event	• Mythological legends • Through ancestors • Repeat participation in the event • Connect to roots	• Performance of age old traditional rituals through generations	• Spatial manifestation of the festival at the ghats
Narratives adding symbolic meaning to place	• Collective consciousness • Sense of collective solidarity and unity	• Recollection of events in the narratives as per the legends	• Significance of the site of performance of the rituals
Place Attachment			
Historical attachment due to cultural events	• Nostalgic place memories	• Display of artefacts having symbolic significance	• The site of festival connecting major historic centres of the city
Emotional Attachment to place	• Feeling of loss due to socio-cultural changes in celebration • Nostalgic place memories • Sense of connectedness • Sense of belongingness • Sense of familiarity • Sense of community	• Spectacularisation adding new layer of meaning	• Scale and magnitude of festival • New spaces added to existing event space

Factors forming Place Identity	Socio-cultural > Spatial	Equally Socio-cultural & Spatial	Spatial > Socio-cultural
Place dependence	• Familiarity-Personal experiences • Shared collective experience	• Similarities to native places • Associational value with the space	• Event place attachment
Urban reminders of place	• Familiarity through native spatial association	• Symbolic ritualistic objects	• Places of worship • Site for event performance
Place memory	• Community revitalisation • Narratives, text, devotional and folk songs • Association with childhood memories	• Socio-cultural activities • Food, offerings	• Sites of religious rites and rituals
Spirit of a place	• Collective gratitude • Narratives around shared beliefs • Connect to origin of event • Social identity	• Social and cultural visibility • Social space	• Space promoting socio-cultural interactions
Place Experience			
Place Event Engagement	• Add new layers of meaning to space	• Public displays of performance • Shared collective engagement in space	• Establish presence in space • Create new spaces for performance
Self-Esteem & Self-Efficacy	• Collective experience of shared beliefs • Sense of familiarity with others	• Pleasure of shared activities	• Visual culture depicting traditional cultural markers
Place Involvement	• Shared involvement leading to collective identity	• Existential insideness due to intense involvement with space • Behavioural insideness due to direct involvement with activities • Vicarious insideness due to nostalgic associations	• Performance of activities through formal and informal involvement

5.3.1 More spatial than socio-cultural

For participants identifying with those cultural event spaces that were defined more by the spatial aspects of the event space, the themes that emerged consistently in most of their narratives were the notion of **visual appeal** of the place (landscape, natural setting, monuments, sacred places of historical and spiritual importance, display of visual culture depicting traditional cultural markers), **familiarity** (frequency of visit, repeat activities), **physical comfort and safety** (general safety, comfort) and **functionality** (accessibility, proximity, efficiency, flexibility, adaptability).

The feeling of familiarity in such event spaces was expressed as a significant factor that enables participants to develop their sense of individual and shared identity. Association with the space through frequency of visit over generations along with repeat performance of the various activities in a collective environment was essential to their formation of identity. Another aspect that underlined the experiences of the participants was the ability of the space to accommodate spontaneous spatial experiences.

Almost all the participants expressed an affinity towards natural landscape elements such as the river and surrounding hills, and considered these to be an important aspect of event place settings that alleviate the experience of the event as well as being sites of performance. The conduct of various formal and informal activities in such places was mentioned as a strong factor that enabled a feeling of connectedness with the spatial setting.

5.3.2 Equally socio-cultural and spatial

Amongst the themes which were defined equally by socio-cultural and spatial parameters of place experiences, the most prominent and frequently occurring themes were **familiarity** and **belonging to a place** (derived from shared commonality, repeat spatial experiences, memory objects, shared history), **shared sense of safety and comfort, socio-psychological comfort** (derived through interaction with others), **distinctiveness** and **territoriality** (sense of ownership).

The main theme of discussion here was how participants' spatial experience revealed interesting yet implicit manifestation and negotiations of their need to 'belong' and 'connect' to the place, people and the activities occurring in such spaces. Distinctiveness and territoriality allowed the participants to express their sense of ownership and also helped the event spaces to establish their social entity in the wider social space. There was relative absence and importance of material aspects as notions of physical comfort and safety were induced by shared commonality with other participants. Relevance was given more on socio-psychological comfort derived from shared beliefs and traditions. It was observed that participants also expressed feelings of loss due to socio-cultural changes observed at these event spaces. The ability of the event space to accommodate performance of various impromptu activities and unselfconscious behaviour was considered as integral to their sense of connectedness to the

space. The participants' sense of self-efficacy was further enhanced due to their involvement in various formal and informal activities.

Although these themes were defined by the socio-cultural background of participants, they are realised through spatial manifestations in the event spaces.

5.3.3 More socio-cultural than spatial

Those themes that placed more emphasis on the socio-cultural aspects of place experience and which encouraged the sense of identity for participants were **religious needs, nostalgic place memories, shared connectedness, collective attachment, collective memory, and the sense of community/social relations** (defined by collective experience, cultural insideness, empathetic insideness). Participants' social and cultural backgrounds played a significant role in determining how they identify themselves with the environment.

In this context, religious needs emerged as an important need for participants identifying with a specific environment. Participants' narratives also expressed an empathetic attachment, shared connectedness with aspects of event spaces that allowed them to recollect collective memories. The sense of *communitas* through social relations was given paramount importance in their narratives.

All the above narratives show the different perceptions of spaces by the participants in cultural event spaces indicating the influences of socio-cultural conditioning of participants in engaging and identifying themselves with various environments of the event spaces.

During the interviews when participants discussed their sense of safety, connecting with the other fellow devotees gave them a sense of belonging and escape from feeling isolated.

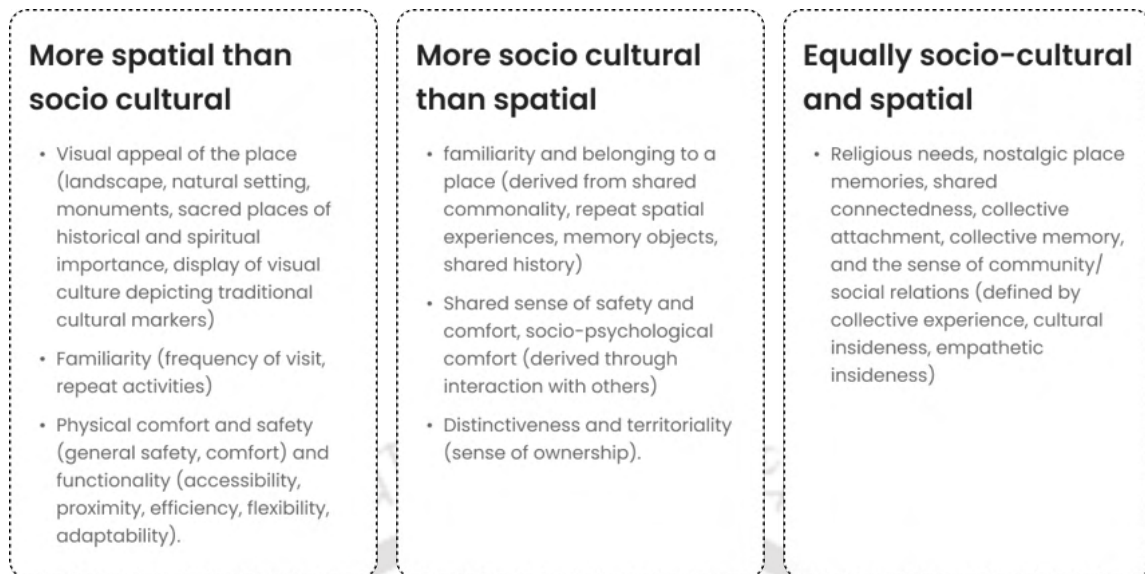


Figure 5.12: Summary of emerging themes and their socio-cultural and spatial relevance

5.3.4 Inference of Place Identity factors and their socio-cultural and spatial relevance

The themes under the three emergent themes discussed above were analysed for their interconnections with the various Place Identity factors and their socio-cultural and spatial relevance/significance in participant's experience of the event spaces (Fig. 5.13 & Fig. 5.14). The individual cells were colour coded referring to the extent of socio-cultural and spatial relevance attached to each Place Identity factor. The blank cells indicate the absence of the Place Identity factors in the participants' narratives of event-place experiences. While Sensory Engagement of Place, Place Invariants, Place Dependence, Place Event Engagement, Distinctiveness, Urban Reminders largely emphasised the Socio-spatial aspects of people's experiences, Narratives, Historical Knowledge of Place, Emotional Attachment to Place, Place Memory, Spirit of Place involved Socio-cultural aspects more compared to Spatial aspects. Self-esteem & Self-efficacy, Place Involvement, Historical Attachment emphasised both Socio-spatial and Socio-cultural aspects in participants' experiences.

Sensory engagement with place and Place event engagement had the highest overall impact on the participants' experiences (Fig. 5.15). This analysis reinstates the hypothesis that "Cultural events may influence the identities of people involved and their construct of Place Identity". Emotional attachment to place and Place dependence are significant dimensions of identity

formation in the two case study event spaces. In the case of Ambubachi Mela, the event spaces are located in the Kamakhya Temple precinct along with nearby auxiliary event zones. During Chhath Puja, the event site is the most significant aspect of the festival as the rituals pertaining to the festival cannot be carried out without the presence of a water body. Thus, the ghats of the river are integral to the performance of the festival.



Figure 5.13: Place Identity factors and their socio-spatial relevance (Ambubachi Mela)

As the Kamakhya temple has a high footfall of tourists all year long, which increases significantly during the Ambubachi Mela, combined with the mythical and symbolic significance of the site, aids in developing a sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy among the participants’ due to the high value imparted to the precinct. It also emphasises the importance of tourists/devotees in increasing the Place Identity value of the place. The auxiliary event spaces are located in the everyday urban spaces, hence the drastic transformation during the

Ambubachi Mela and Chhath Puja is a major contributor to people-place ties in the event precinct. The site of Chhath Puja is located centrally in the city and acts as pause points for people which increases the place dependence aspect of the precinct. Awareness of the historical significance of the event precinct and the tradition of retelling of narratives of the place in the form of folk songs, performances, dance forms and likewise also significantly influence Place Identity.

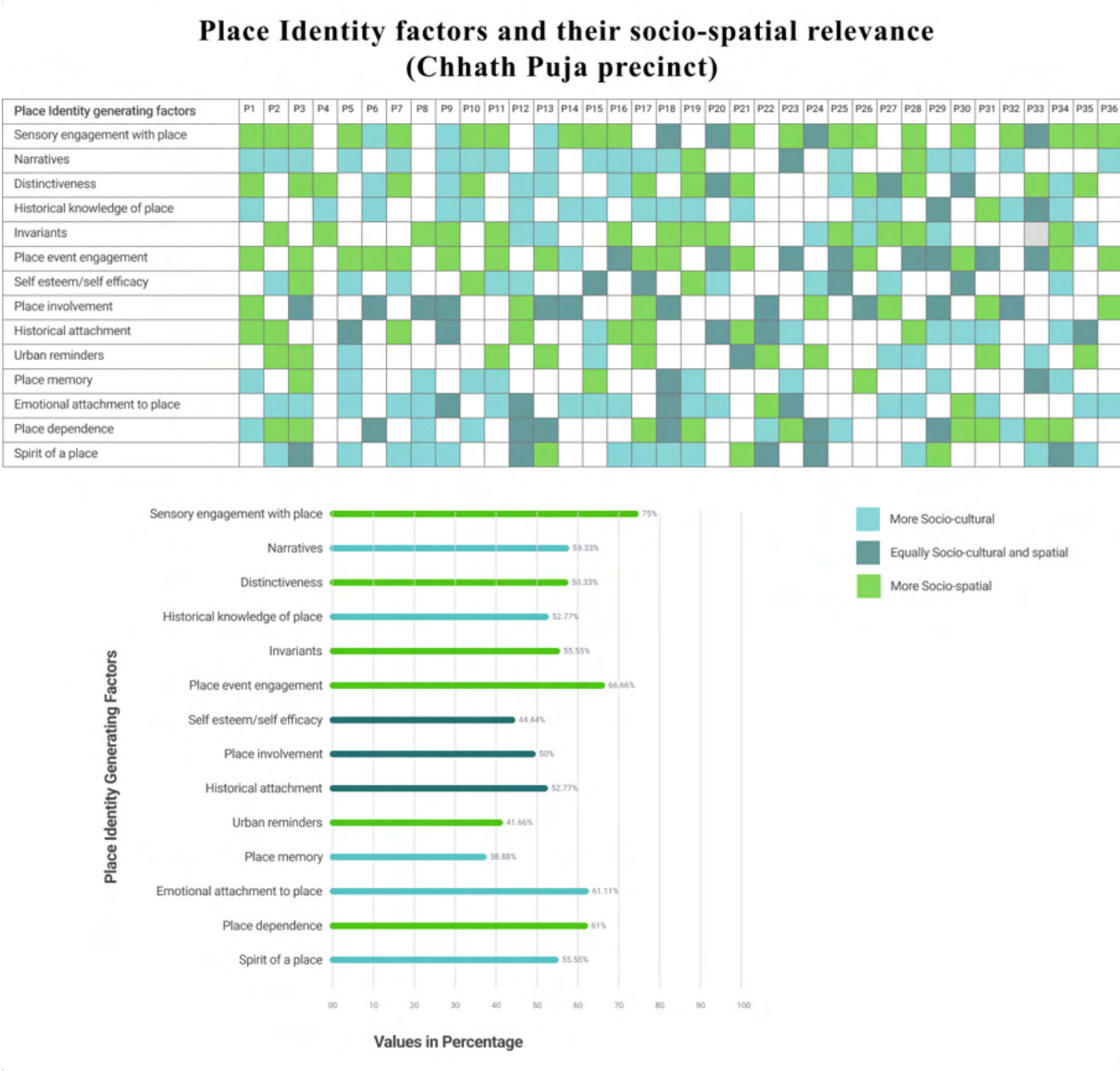


Figure 5.14: Place Identity factors and their socio-spatial relevance (Chhath Puja)

The Kamakhya Temple as the site of Ambubachi Mela acts as an urban reminder of the place

due to its symbolic and historical significance. The Brahmaputra river ghat connects all the major historic areas of the city, thus making the participants of Chhath Puja aware of their historical significance.

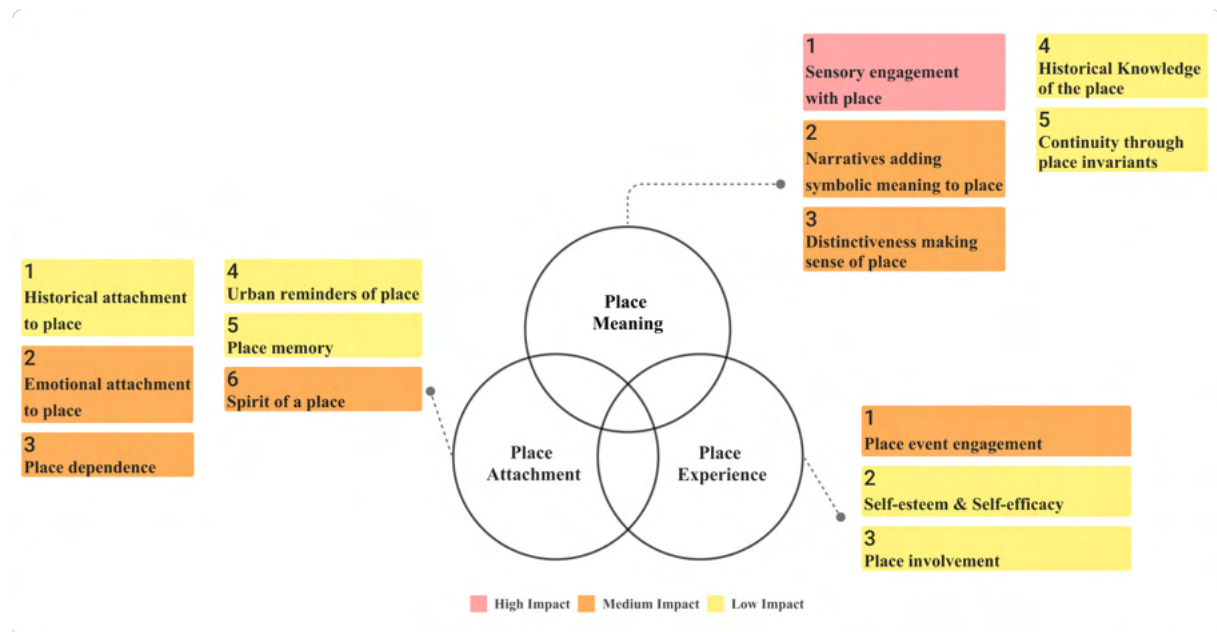


Figure 5.15: Place Identity factors and their relative significance

5.4 Conclusion

The decoding exercise of the participants' perception of the cultural event spaces revealed the myriad aspects of such spaces which are integrated in their lives. The tangible aspects are not just limited to the site of the events, but comprises the visual displays of cultural artefacts, decorations, and the overall visual culture of the cultural event. The intangible aspects of event spaces such as shared connectedness, sense of community, cuisine, festivities also add to participants' construct of Place Identity. Further, it is also realised that each factor contributing to the construct of Place Identity affects and is affected by the socio-cultural and spatial aspects. This highlights the significance of spatial practices in studying identity construction and its relevance as observed from the narratives of the participants. The analysis of the various modes of place experience related to identity experiences revealed that the physical and visual aspects of place experiences plays a significant role in the participants' identity experiences (presence of Empathetic Insideness, Behavioural Insideness and Objective Outsideness). This chapter

serves as the crux of the research and the inferences are further discussed to be developed as a theoretical model for studying identity in the next chapter. The theoretical construct of analysis has been further developed into an interdisciplinary framework and forms the theoretical contribution as discussed in the concluding chapter.





Chapter 6 : SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

This final chapter of the thesis assimilates, interprets and summarises the findings and contribution of this research. The summary explains the premise of the research and the research design that was developed to address the aims and research questions of the research. This chapter discusses the theoretical and methodological contribution of the research. Considering that cities are akin to living eco systems, where change is but obvious, a process-oriented approach was suggested instead of a product-oriented approach. This could be the right stage to implement in a second-tiered city where no formalised planning has taken place yet. A strategic framework was thus designed to guide the intervention process which also allows for flexibility to urban designers and policy makers. A set of objectives were included as a part of this framework to make it workable while respecting the essence of the built environment. Reviewing the research process by stating the contributions the research made to the body of knowledge, this chapter concludes with scope for further research.

6.1 Summary & Discussion

The thesis sets out to understand identity constructions and negotiations through the study of cultural events in multicultural urban environments. Building on the emerging significance of cultural event spaces in contemporary urbanism and the changing roles of social space in the urban fabric, this research addresses the following key aim of understanding, interpreting and establishing the role of cultural events in the formation of individual and place identity through event-place-people experiences. Based on the case studies, the research objectives were:

- To understand the significance of cultural events in the present context of urbanism in India.
- To understand how the spatial aspects of everyday urban spaces accommodate and accentuate the performance of cultural events.
- To decipher the various theoretical constructs of place-identity for required depth of understanding of the dimensions of place meaning, place experience and place attachment.
- To objectively document residents' perception of Place-Identity through the theoretical constructs of Place Identity.
- To compare the perception of place-identity of the attendees with the spatiality of festivals.
- To identify the spatial attributes contributing to the enhancement and construction of place-identity.
- To establish assessment frameworks for intervening in multicultural urban environments

The preliminary study was carried out to understand people's perception of place and their associative links, which informed the overall discussion for this research. The second part of this study focussed on the lived experiences of the residents which was instrumental in formation of the questionnaire for the main case study by unearthing associative links between people and place. The inferences emerging from the preliminary study on experiences related to place and identity along with literature helped in comprehending the tangible and intangible aspects of a place which defines the formation and nature of relationship with the urban environment while underlying their engagement in such places. The residents' construct of

Place Identity of their city was found to be deeply rooted in the spatial practices and representational spaces.

In the analysis of the two main case studies, IPA was used for transcribing the interview transcripts which allowed several sub themes to emerge that defined the place and identity relationship based on the relationship between Place Identity factors and their socio-cultural and spatial relevance. The characteristic nature of any experience in the physical environment is embedded in both socio-cultural and spatial elements which paved the way in the categorisation of participants' narratives in three ways - *more socio-cultural than spatial*, *equally socio-cultural and spatial*, and *more spatial than socio-cultural* - facilitating the understanding of the significance placed on spatial elements of the place identity experiences. The relevance of the socio-cultural and spatial themes emphasised the significance of spatiality in understanding Identity concepts in present contemporary societies.

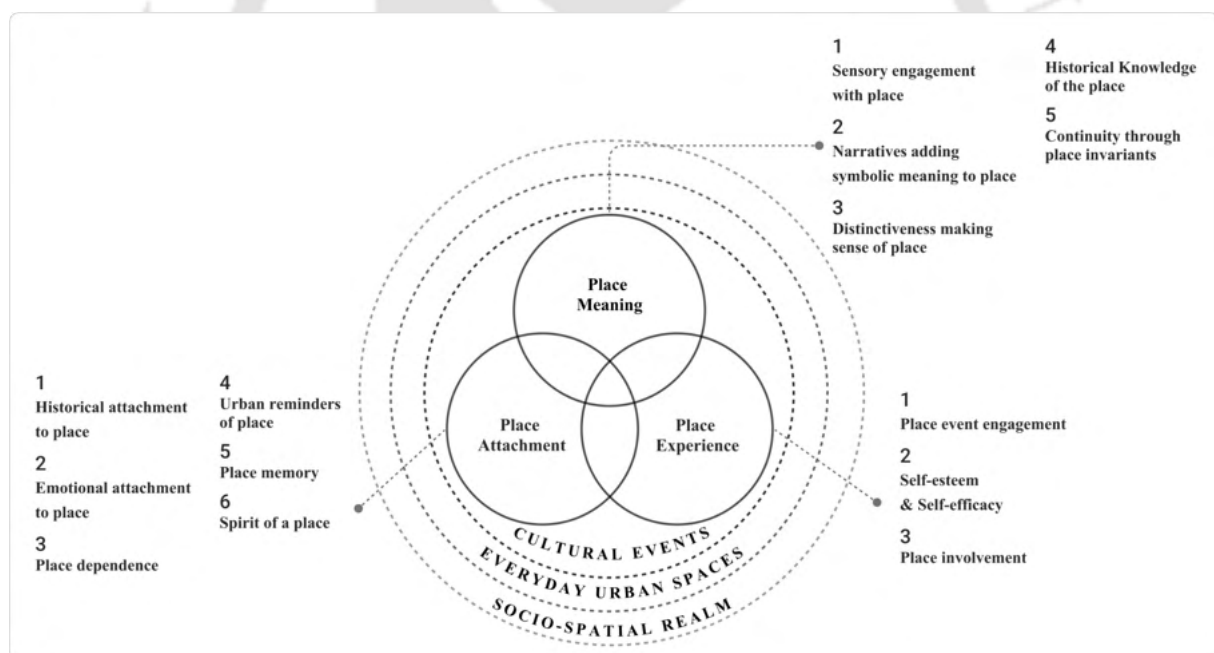


Figure 6.1: Place Identity and Socio-spatial complexity (Source: Author)

The concepts of 'social' and 'place' are fused to form the socio-spatial realm in which meaningful experiences are created through places. The research explained how the three aspects of 'Place Meaning', 'Place Attachment' and 'Place Experience' interacting with one another is embedded within the socio-spatial realm. The socio-spatial realm acts as the means

which allows the interaction among these three aspects contributing to the sense of identity of people.

6.2 Contribution of the thesis

6.2.1 Factors affecting Place Identity in multicultural urban environments

Two new aspects were added to the foundational blocks of Place Identity which were previously formulated through literature review for the analysis of the case studies. ‘Sense of Territoriality’ and ‘Sense of Openness and Accessibility’ which by contributing to Place Meaning and Place Attachment respectively help in reinforcing Place Identity. Fig. 6.1 shows the addition of two factors and how they fit into the Place Identity framework formulated through literature review.

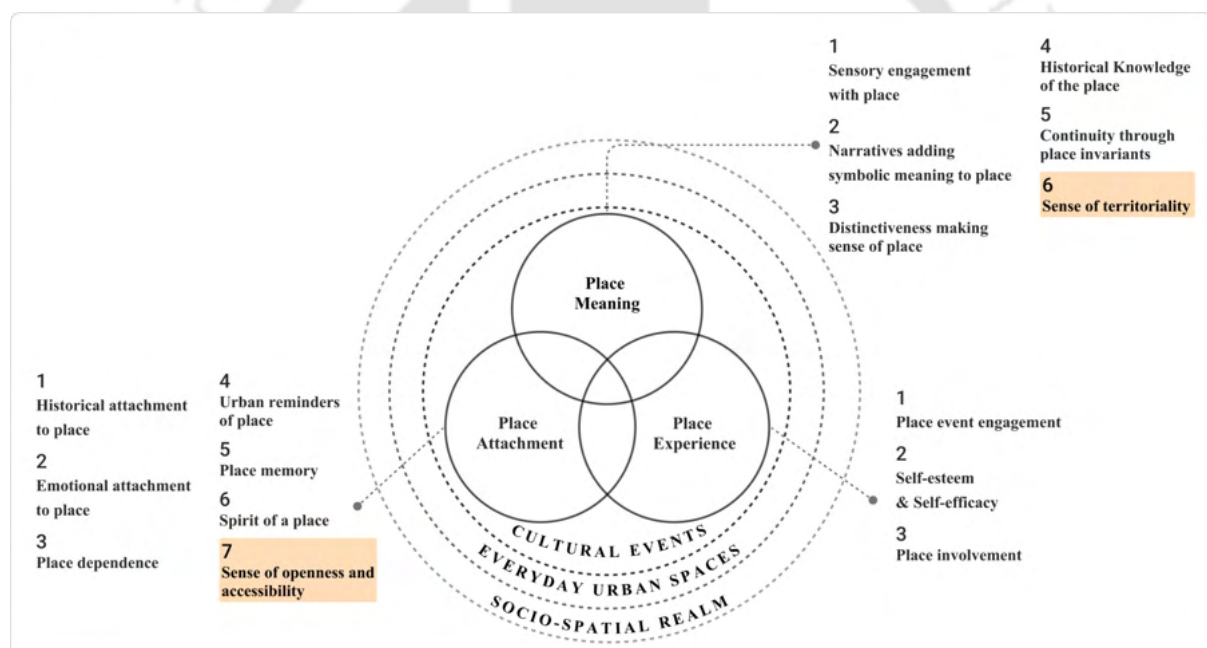


Figure 6.2: Addition of two new aspects to the Place Identity framework as an outcome of the research

Territoriality was observed to have contributed directly to the sense of ownership of the event place which was intrinsically related to their sense of ‘connectedness’ and ‘belongingness’. In some respects, this experience is bound to the participants’ characterisation of the event place as a community in the wider social space. The event places were further construed as a platform for establishing the participants’ presence and recognition as a collective presence and social

entity in the larger social context. Hence, the spatial elements contributing to the ‘sense of territoriality’ become significant components enhancing Place Identity.

The second factor contributing to the Place Identity framework was ‘Sense of Openness and Accessibility’. Places are marked by various socio-cultural aspects such as class, caste and economic status and might not be accessible to everyone. Hence, accessibility to a place takes into consideration all forms of visual, physical, social and economic access. Event places are essentially public in nature which contributes significantly to diverse sects of people associating with the place. However, if in some instances, the format of any event requires participants to pay a fee or limits the number of entrees to the event for both the performer and the audience, the place-accessibility reduces significantly wherein only a certain section of society gets to associate with such spaces. Places such as the Kamakhya Temple or the ghats of the river Brahmaputra thrive due to their publicness. As these spaces are accessible in all forms, they provide experiences rich in socio-cultural engagements. Place-accessibility through their openness characteristic allows diverse people to engage with a place thus helping them form affective ties with the place and creating a sense of *communitas*.

6.3 Strategic Framework - An open approach towards planning process

Place Identities are hard to build through top down processes and are not adaptable to changes. However, festivals and events could be part of the bottom-up processes that contribute to change by providing an arena for connecting people in new ways and roles while leading to self-realisation, self-examination while challenging traditions. The temporary urbanism of event places challenges the idea of linear, hierarchical top down and contextual design approaches towards planning cities. However, temporality does not equate to incompleteness and can serve as an open template to be developed, transformed and materialised as a set of relationships between various components that get progressively specified.

Based on the various processes of Place Identity formation derived from literature as well as through the case studies, a Strategic Framework to provide direction towards intervention in multicultural second tier cities in India. The emphasis of the framework is on a continuous evolving process to accommodate the fact that urban settings are living ecosystems that are

prone to continuous flux and change. The nine steps proposed in the framework aims at achieving certain objectives by exemplifying the process of achieving them. The contribution of each strategy in influencing the three dimensions of Place Identity will be further elaborated in the following sections.

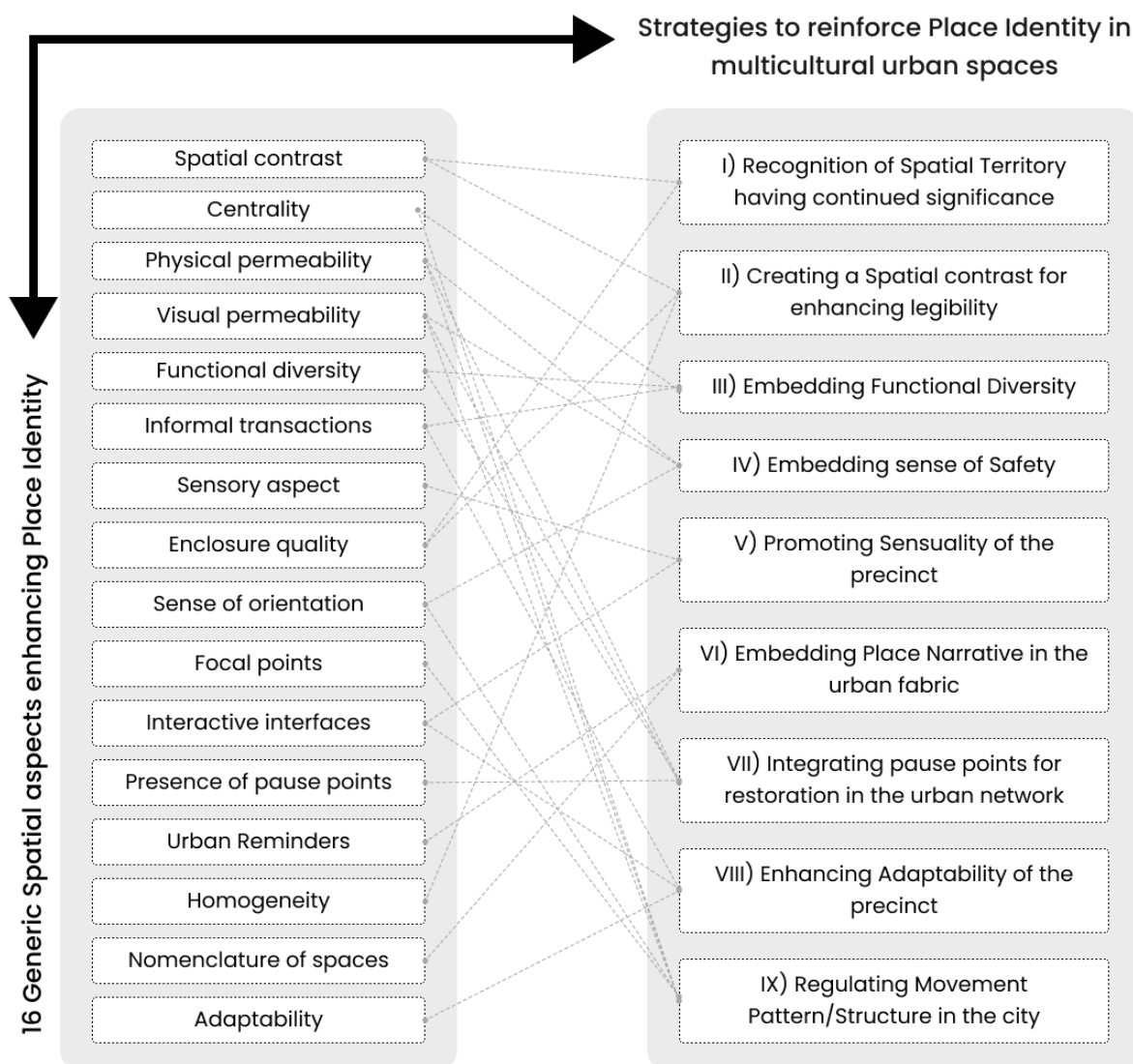


Figure 6.3: Formation of the Strategic Framework for reinforcing Place identity

6.3.1 Recognition of Spatial Territory having continued significance

Taking cues and references from the case studies undertaken as a part of this research, it is observed that cultural event places have certain spatial attributes that contribute towards

participants' notion of Place Identity. Hence, the first step towards demarcating the spatial extent of cultural event spaces is through mapping of the infrastructure of event spaces in the city. Other aspects such as distinct natural elements such as the river Brahmaputra, the Nilachal hill in Guwahati are also places of continued significance and contribute to the formation of Place Identity. Thus, by overlapping these two layers, the spatial extent of continued significance can be demarcated. Only after demarcating the territory acting as a repository for Place Identity, it can be deliberated upon whether to work within the territory to enhance it or extend it beyond the spatial territory to include other areas of the city by tying them together. The porous nature of event spaces, which usually spills over to the surrounding places, manifests not only in the physical planning but also in the manner of blending of the public, private and sacred spaces.

This identified spatial territory can be demarcated in the development plan of the city as a special zone with their own set of separate bye-laws during the duration of cultural events in such defined spaces. Any intervention within the demarcated zone would require proper sanctioning by the development authority with regard to activities that are permitted with the intention of achieving diversity, adaptability, and informal interactions can be mentioned. The recognition and formal representation of such spatial territory can add to Place Meaning by strengthening the place narratives while raising awareness about the history of the place.

6.3.2 Creating a Spatial contrast for enhancing legibility

Spatial contrast enhances the legibility and eventually imparts distinctiveness while adding to the cognition of a space. Contrast can be created through a variety of ways such as socio-cultural, spatial, visual and symbolic elements in the urban environment. Such distinctive spatial experiences can break the homogenous, mundane and monotony of urban environments. Spatial distinctiveness can be perceived and experienced through uniqueness of spatial elements in the precinct, or through juxtaposition of spatial elements and activities. Apart from the built fabric, elements such as trees, water bodies, colours, textures, which create visual stimulation can also create spatial contrast. Such urban environments serve as distinctive reference points and allow people to engage with and enhance their sense of identity with the environment. The activities contained within such spatial territory can also create spatial contrast from the adjoining urban fabric. Distinctive activities can encourage people to engage with the environment and initiate the process of place engagement which can eventually enable

people to form a sense of connectedness with the place leading to Place Attachment. Identifying and representing such spaces that could nurture distinctive experiences not only adds to the distinctiveness of the place but also fosters the creative economy of the place. For instance, the Kamakhya Temple precinct with its proliferation of a variety of formal and informal outlets displaying and selling cultural items imparts a visual and perceptual quality to the space, which gets heightened during the celebration of events. The sense of entry and enclosure perceived through the change in width of the road as one goes uphill towards the Kamakhya temple, along with the distinct change in natural landscape provides a distinct spatial contrast from the adjoining dense physical fabric. The uniqueness of character of the landform, as in the case of the Kamakhya Temple, M.G. Road and Uzanbazar precinct, can heighten the perception of the spaces. Such spatial elements providing unique sensory experiences and distinctiveness contributes to the cognitive dimension of the place.

6.3.3 Embedding Functional Diversity

Functionality is an integral aspect of any urban space that allows people to identify with a place. Functional diversity is an essential aspect contributing to the urban spatial experiences. The discussions in the previous chapters shows that the precincts with functional diversity had a very high Place Identity value. Such functional diversity imparts a place with flexibility and manifests the ability of the urban environment to be efficient for a diverse range of people, which is an integral need for multicultural urban environments. Such spaces by allowing diverse people to interact, creates place dependence and aids in the formation of associative ties with the place. Over time, a sense of ownership is established as people continually engage with a particular space. Such a sense of ownership and place dependence due to a place's existence in the city for a long duration eventually helps in the formation of historical place attachment (Altman & Low, 1992; Cross, 2015; Hay, 1998). It is however crucial to embed such functional diversity along with the everyday functions to avoid segregation from being part of the city. As observed in the Kamakhya Temple precinct, the functional diversity of the precinct is firmly embedded in the everyday functions of the adjoining built fabric and acts as pause points for people in their daily routine. While deciding on infusing any new functions to such precincts, it should be borne in mind that such functions should be viable to diverse users physically, socially and economically to enhance the diversity and pluralism of multicultural urban spaces.

Hence, embedding functional diversity through place dependence and enhancing place

accessibility creates historical place attachment while instilling people with a sense of self and ownership for such places. These attributes contribute towards the place creation process as people become increasingly more involved with the place. Hence, embedding functional diversity by influencing place dependence and place attachment, this strategy can contribute towards place identity significantly.

6.3.4 Embedding sense of Safety

Safety is a default requirement in any urban environment for people to connect to a place and enable meaningful interactions. Perceived sense of safety allows people to safely manoeuvre a place and gradually develop a sense of familiarity and comfort with that environment. Maslow's hierarchy of needs considers safety assurance of a place as a prerequisite for higher-order experience of identifying oneself with a place. A safer environment offers people confidence to negotiate and use urban places in a flexible and creative manner. Such places enable people to develop a relationship of trust which strengthens their connectedness with that space. The sense of safety relies on multiple factors such as the environment, people, legibility of the elements of space, amenities which all combine together to create this dimension of social space. As was observed in both the festivals, there were volunteers and officials in various nodes of the festival arenas to guide the devotees in the event of getting lost. Emergency services were also stationed at strategic points across the venues. The presence of fellow devotees and the myriad of informal activities present at the site of the festivals further fostered this feeling of safety and comfort. The participants mostly travelled in groups and in situations such as getting separated from the group, they usually travelled back to the last known spot. These facilities along with the familiarity of being part of a group, thus strengthened their perceived sense of safety. Many of the devotees have been frequent participants in both the festivals and hence were acquainted with the festival site and the activities. They in return served the role of a guide for the new fellow festival goers. Familiarity fostered the feeling of safety and a shared sense of being part of a community. As observed the M.G. Road precinct provided opportunities for various active and passive engagements and functional diversity for people to choose from, thus making the precinct safe and vibrant. Thus, by fostering the sense of safety and comfort, the self-esteem and self-efficacy of people were enhanced both during everyday activities as well as during celebration of temporal cultural events. This in turn will further contribute positively to enhancing Place Identity while adding new layers of meaning

and associative values to the place.

6.3.5 Promoting Sensuality of the precinct

Lynch (1960) in his seminal work describes how sensory perceptions are organised in the human mind to form 'mental images' or environmental patterns which makes a place memorable. Lynch categorised five spatial elements into paths, nodes, districts, landmarks and nodes which contributed to this formation of a mental image of a place by modulating these elements. However the sensory nature is individualistic in nature and varies from individuals to individuals (Cross, 2015; Rapaport, 1977; Relph, 1976). The visual dimension is considered to be the most dominant of all the sensory dimensions. Hence, the visual aspects of any urban environment play a very significant role in the formation of the perception of a place apart from influencing the orientation of the place. Kaplan emphasises on the ways of creating a visually stimulating built environment by incorporating elements of surprise which creates a sense of mystery and awe. As was observed the landscape played a very important role in the visual perception of the precincts discussed in the previous chapters. Apart from the visual sense, the sense of taste and smell imparted by the foodscape play a very important role in imparting sensuality in Indian cities. The senses of sound and smell, even though not visible, can encourage people to explore a place by inducing curiosity. During celebration of cultural events, all the sensory aspects are heightened enhancing the experience of the place. Thus, by contributing to the sensory cognition of places, the distinctiveness of the place is enhanced while adding meaning to these places. Sensuality also compliments the spirit of the place by creating collective memories which contributes to associative ties between people and the place. Infused in the celebrations of festivals, sensuality enhances the sensory engagement with place and increases place involvement. Thus, by contributing to the cognitive, affective and experiential aspects of a place, sensuality contributes to reinforcing Place Identity.

6.3.6 Embedding Place Narrative in the urban fabric

Most Indian cities having a historic core are repositories of myths, legends and narratives reinforced by socio-cultural elements such as rituals and symbols. As discussed in chapter five, such narratives are embedded in the built fabric manifested through symbolism, place names, colours, murals and similar elements. The re-enactment of the various narratives pertaining to the festivals under study further added new layers of meaning to the urban fabric. As such, any

new intervention should consider the sensitive nature of place meanings imparted through narratives. Representation of such narratives in the everyday urban spaces would further help to reinforce their value by inculcating a sense of curiosity and awareness among people. This can contribute positively towards the feeling of cultural insideness which is significant for multicultural urban environments. Such interventions can enhance the distinctiveness of a place and contribute towards place continuity by showcasing narratives as invariants of the place. Embedding narratives in the urban fabric can strengthen people's association with a place and encourage people to know more about place history. Being part of the public realm such experiences would be accessible to everyone and perform as urban reminders of the place. During celebration of festivals where narratives are re-enacted, associative ties with the place are further enhanced through place engagement. Such experiences being distinctive to a place, contribute to the self-esteem and self-efficacy of people and thus reinforces Place Identity by addressing the cognitive, affective and experiential aspects of a place.

6.3.7 Integrating pause points for restoration in the urban network

Korpela et al. (1989) defines restoration as a process of recovery following stress or fatigue that enhances one's mood infusing them with renewed energy. In the fast paced contemporary urban living people increasingly feel alienation and displacement, leading to an increasingly fragile relationship between people and place. Hence, restorative quality of a place is an integral aspect that can help in reconstituting people's sense of self and identity and lead to place attachment. Spatial experiences that allow individual and collective restoration enables people to identify with a place and helps in their identity construction/negotiation. In urban spaces such experiences could be fostered by pause points or a break from the daily routine of life. Gehl (2007) emphasises that a good quality space should offer 'optional' and 'social activities' to occur naturally alongside 'necessary activities'. The social life and vibrancy created by open spaces such as parks, accessible public spaces allows restoration by acting as pause points. Such spaces could also act as 'thirdspaces' (Soja, 2003) or 'incidental spaces' which are unplanned spaces providing spontaneous nature of experiences. Incidental spaces allow people to behave in an unconscious manner providing a deeper insight into behavioural aspects of people at both social and individual level. An open ground where cultural events are celebrated, for instance, could contain many memories imparted due to the socio-cultural nature of such event spaces. Memories attached to such event spaces juxtaposed with the history, narratives of the cultural

event enhances their association with the space. Restorative experiences as described by Maslow's hierarchy of needs falls under the characteristic nature of highest level of experience and thus appropriate situation for embedding a strong sense of identity in a person. Such a relationship with a place can occur in various ways such as inside outside connectedness, permeability, accessibility, sociability aspects of the place. By integrating pause points in the urban network, which allow moments of reflection and contemplation, and thus facilitates interaction with one's self so as to reconstitute or restructure one's identity configuration. Such pause points being social spaces, allow formation of collective memories, publicly accessible and are the spirit of the place as they portray the social life of the place. Thus, they contribute towards Place Attachment as they are instrumental in bringing people together. Integrating both passive and active engagement during temporal events, such places also contribute towards place experience. By contributing towards the cognitive, affective and experiential dimensions of a place, such pause points of restoration contribute significantly towards reinforcing Place Identity in multicultural urban environments.

6.3.8 Enhancing Adaptability of the precinct

Cities are synonymous with a living ecosystem as they constantly have to adapt to changes imparted over time. Hence, the urban fabric needs to have a robust system that would be able to adapt to newer needs while retaining their essence. Inorder to accommodate additions, alterations and temporal transformations, it is imperative to design the built fabric in a thoughtful manner keeping this aspect in mind. Bently (Bentley, 1985) defines the robust nature of cities as built typology with a shallow plan consisting of multiple access points and of limited height. Such spatial character is visible in the M.G. Road and Uzanbazar precinct where the linear stretch of road accommodates various spaces for a variety of activities. The presence of parks, open spaces, grounds and the river ghat along with the various residential and commercial buildings are connected by a network of narrow lanes which enhances the robustness of these precincts. During the celebration of cultural events, these spaces transform temporarily to accommodate these socio-cultural activities pertaining to these events. Temporary installations, partitions, signages, completely transform these spaces during celebration of events. Diversity of use, permeability of spaces which make up the robust nature of a place are evident in these precincts which are part of the oldest core of Guwahati as is similarly visible in most older built fabric of Indian cities. For a precinct to be adaptive to

different users and uses, it should be accessible and permeable to fulfil these requirements. This can be achieved by a balanced articulation of built and open spaces which can accommodate spillover activities during cultural events. Such spatial settings can encourage transactions between the formal and informal and the built and open spaces. As visible in the M.G. Road precinct, which accommodates various commercial activities, apart from residential and government institutions, open grounds, river ghats as well as functioning as a major arterial road, continuously has to adapt to the needs and uses of the city while also incorporating all kinds of spillover activities during the frequent celebration of cultural events in the precinct.

Hence, by enhancing the adaptability of the precinct, the diversity of the place increases which imparts vibrancy and increases the livability of the place. By retaining their essence, such urban spaces act as invariants and contribute to the cognitive dimension of the place and historical attachment due to their continued significance. Over time, they will function as urban reminders contributing to place attachment. Thus by contributing to place meaning and place attachment, adaptability of a place helps in enhancing Place Identity.

6.3.9 Regulating Movement Pattern/Structure in the city

As discussed earlier, the precincts under study are zones of continued significance, and the various ways and frequencies of interactions that people have with the place can hold significance on their association with that place. For enhancing this association the movement structure of the place can be modulated in accordance to accommodate people's maximum interaction with the place. Increasing the permeability of the place and making it more accessible from various parts of the city would ensure that more people can interact with the place. Such measures will encourage everyday interaction and place dependence while strengthening the connection to such precincts. Regular encounters with a place also increases the imageability and makes it memorable thus enhancing one's association with the place. When pause points are integrated in the everyday spaces in a structured manner that establishes a visual link to the precinct, it in turn enhances the memorability of the place automatically. The slower the pace of a person in any environmental setting, the more one can gather knowledge of a place, increase their engagement and dynamics with the place (Appleyard, 1979). Thus, slow movement should be encouraged that will encourage people to engage with the place as well as with other people. Such interactions will boost self-esteem of the residents of the place and impart distinctiveness for people who are visiting the place as well. During

cultural events, the movement pattern can be further regulated to accommodate the requirements of the event. Encouraging pedestrian movement to facilitate socio-cultural activities during events can further boost people's place association and formation of collective memory. Thus, by modulating the movement pattern of the place, increased accessibility of the precinct can reinforce significance by facilitating people-place ties, establishing new connections to the place and enhancing Place Identity.

6.4 Contribution of the Strategic Framework towards Place Identity dimensions

The research outlines the objectives as a strategic framework to be achieved under each strategy to contribute towards the Place Identity dimensions. Fig. 6.4 shows how each strategy contributes towards one or multiple dimensions of Place Identity. The strategic framework is thus formulated with objectives to address the three dimensions of Place Meaning, Place Attachment and Place Experience.



Figure 6.4: Contribution of the Strategic Framework to Place Identity dimensions

6.5 Reviewing the research process, key research inquiries and methodological contributions

The research had adopted an interdisciplinary methodology framework to study the complex domain of Place Identity in multicultural urban environments. This methodology helped in understanding the socio-spatial factors that define, determine and influence identity construction and negotiation. The research by reflective analysis of the two case studies in the second-tier multicultural city of Guwahati, effectively addressed the research inquiries to arrive at a generic value that could be applied in the context of other similar Indian cities. The strategic framework developed as a result of these inquiries led to the development of new theoretical ideas, methodologies and methods of inquiry devised which eventually culminated in the strategic framework for integrating participant's construct of Place Identity in the context of cultural events. The chapter wise review of the key contributions of the research to the current body of knowledge are enumerated further in the following sections.

The first chapter elaborated on the background of the research and addressed the first research question which sought to understand the significance of cultural events in present urban environments. By describing the changing urban scenarios, emphasising second-tier Indian cities, the evolving socio-cultural practices were reflected upon, raising the need for studying cultural event spaces. The relevance of this study was established by discussing the various global agendas that emphasises the need for culture-led growth in urban cities. The various national policies were briefly discussed which showed the gap in addressing a sustainable approach towards the development of cities. The proposed Master Plan of Guwahati was analysed further to understand the various development plans which showed the lack of policies that addressed people's 'social needs' and focussed on a more product-oriented approach. Based on this, the hypothesis, "Cultural events may influence the identities of people involved and their construct of Place Identity" was framed and the research design with relevant research questions posited. The first chapter thus situates the research by providing rationale behind the relevance of formulating a research framework.

The second research question investigated the theoretical underpinnings of Place Identity. The theoretical base of the research was built up as a part of the second chapter by discussing various aspects of Identity and relationship between place and identity through various interdisciplinary

perspectives. The various theoretical and perceptual constructs of Place Identity were probed by deconstructing it into dimensions which could be utilised to document a person's perception of place. These constructs were categorised under three processes as 'Place meaning', 'Place Attachment' and 'Place Experience'. Using literature review, fourteen different attributes were sieved out under these three dimensions of Place Identity which were utilised to form the basis for interview questions with the participants.

Another significant aspect of the chapter was to investigate the various aspects of cultural event spaces and their performance in the everyday urban spaces. The theoretical foundation was created by defining 'cultural events' and their components and probing the production of social space. As a theoretical contribution to the research, a list of nine processes which accentuates the performance of events as a result of event-space relationship were deciphered. These nine processes were further utilised in analysing the spatial characteristics of the case studies undertaken for more detailed analysis. This chapter played an important role in exploring the conceptual aspects of cultural events while defining the parameters of analysis.

The third chapter streamlines the methodological process of the thesis by laying out the detailed research methodology covering media for inquiry, documentation process and analytical strategies guided by the operative framework formulated from the previous chapter. The methods incorporated in this research has been outlined as per the sequence of the research design, while elaborating on the appropriateness of each method. The questionnaire formulated for understanding participant's perception of event places could be used in diverse contexts to collate people's perception of places and hence an important contribution of the research. The interdisciplinary framework used for IPA analysis of the data collected from the interviews during case study helped in deciphering the complex data into relevant themes. This interdisciplinary framework was developed from various relevant concepts from the sub domains of this research which acts as a filter for the analysis of the complex theories related to this domain. This approach helped in layering the complex data into various categories and themes that enabled in identifying the overlapping points of intersections and the resultant socio-spatial patterns emerging from their interconnectedness.

The fourth chapter expanded on the spatial qualities of the cultural event spaces as a part of the case studies of the research. A narrative account of the case study city is presented, to gain

perspective on the mythical, legendary and historical aspects of the city. A important contribution of this chapter was developing a taxonomy of cultural events pertaining to their spaces of manifestation, in the case study city. There were four typologies of festive events that were further analysed to arrive at the selected cases for detailed analysis. This chapter included the spatial analysis of the precincts accommodating the two selected cultural events and interpretation of the spatial aspects that enhanced the festive experience, thus addressing the third question of the research inquiry. An in depth analysis of six precincts was carried out on the basis of their visual, functional, social, morphological, perceptual and temporal dimensions. A comprehensive list of fifteen generic spatial characteristics of high Place Identity precincts were arrived at. Through an analysis of the spatial aspects enhancing Place Identity of the two case studies, and a thorough evaluation under the nine event space relationship processes as identified from literature, a list of sixteen spatial aspects were inferred which play a significant role during festive as well as everyday urbanism. It is proposed that any intervention strategy should take these spatial aspects in mind as they have retained the essence of the place while allowing for appropriation when required.

The fifth chapter gives an overview of the resident's perception of the case study city Guwahati leading to numerous inferences which were elaborated in the chapter. The operative framework was utilised to decode participant's perception with an attempt to draw inferences between factors influencing Place Identity to get a holistic understanding of the three dimensions of Place identity for each of the case studies. By analysing the manner in which the fourteen factors influenced people's perception of cultural events and their role in enhancing Place Identity and their socio-spatial relevance, patterns of Place Identity formation were deciphered. 'Sensory engagement with place' and 'Place event engagement' had the highest overall impact on participant's experiences and construct of Place Identity. This chapter also highlighted the importance of spatial practices in the study of identity which adds to the body of knowledge.

The concluding chapter formulates a strategic framework for intervening in any second tiered multicultural Indian city while building on the sixteen spatial aspects inferred in the previous chapter. This objective oriented strategic framework by serving as a checklist is the outcome of the research and attempts to fill in the gap between various schemes and policies proposed by the various government bodies. It also proposes contribution to the planning and development

of the Master Plan of Guwahati city by emphasising on the ‘social needs’ of people rather than the ‘product-oriented’ approach being followed today.

6.5 Scope for further research

The richness and the complexity of this research domain of ‘people-place-identity’ relations in contemporary urban environments lays the ground for several trajectories for research and investigation. One of the major contributions was the strategic framework and the theoretical findings as discussed earlier which facilitates in refining the existing body of knowledge on identity. On the theoretical front, these findings can be used for understanding and reframing the existing identity theories in different disciplines. A few higher order questions arose such as: What are the ways and means for creating opportunities which could push the agenda for the development process based on people-place associations forward? Can they be linked to the existing urban design guidelines for potentially reinterpreting to facilitate people-place interactions which is fundamental for Place Identity construction/negotiation. Especially for multicultural second tiered cities in India, with no proper planning guidelines in place, such an exercise would help in framing and implementing development policies for an integrated urban design development.

Different multicultural and growing second-tiered cities could be studied using the same framework of analysis to understand how the specific spatial characteristics of a city might have an impact on people’s perception of Place Identity. The socio-spatial propositions presented in this research would also benefit from deeper exploration and a toolkit can be proposed to define interventions at a national level. Such questions and research trajectories can be taken up as areas for further research.

A generalised detailed toolkit could be developed along with the strategic framework guidelines to provide a step by step approach towards intervention in the urban development process while allowing for appropriation according to the context, considering the organic nature of urban systems.

In the process of the research, many limitations of space, time and cultural frame were pre decided as conditions to be followed which allowed for in-depth inquiry. These limitations set

in this research could also be scope for varied research in the future. India being a country of diversity, with diverse forms of spatial manifestation of culture, comparison of typology of events and event-space relationship amongst them could produce some insightful knowledge. Furthermore, the research does not consider the context of Covid-19 pandemic and its influence on celebration of cultural events. This aspect can also provide scope for further analysis to understand any changes that might have been imparted on people's perception of cultural events and Place Identity.





REFERENCES

1. Aase, T., & Fossåskaret, E. (2007). *Created realities. The production and interpretation of qualitative data*.
2. Altman, I. (1992). A Transactional Perspective on Transitions to New Environments. *Environment and Behavior*, 24(2), 268–280.
3. Altman, I., & Low, S. M. (1992). Symbolic ties that bind - Place attachment in the Plaza. In I. Altman & S. M. Low (Eds.), *Human Behaviour and Environment - Place Attachment* (pp. 1–12). Springer, Boston, MA.
4. Andrews, H., & Leopold, T. (2013). *Events and the social sciences*. Routledge.
5. Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. University of Minnesota Press.
6. Appadurai, A. (2000). Grassroots globalization and the research imagination. *Public Culture*, 12(1), 1–19.
7. Appleyard, D. (1979). The environment as a social symbol. *Ekistics*, 272–281.
8. Arnaut, K. (2013). Making Space for Performativity: Publics, Powers, and Places in a Multi-Register Town Festival (Bondoukou, Côte d'Ivoire). In *Devising Order* (pp. 81–102). Brill.
9. Backman, K. F., Backman, S. J., Uysal, M., & Sunshine, K. M. (1995). Event tourism: An examination of motivations and activities. *Festival Management and Event Tourism*, 3(1), 15–24.
10. Baker, S. M., & Kennedy, P. F. (1994). Death by nostalgia: A diagnosis of context-specific cases. . *ACR North American Advances*.
11. Barua, B. K. (1969). A cultural history of Assam. In *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (Vol. 1, Issue 1). Lawyer's Book Stall.
12. Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Interpersonal Development*.
13. Bell, C. M. (1997). *Ritual: Perspectives and dimensions*. Oxford University Press on Demand.
14. Bentley, I. (1985). *Responsive environments: A manual for designers*. . Routledge.

15. Bird, S. E. (2002). It makes sense to us: Cultural identity in local legends of place. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 31(5), 519–547.
16. Boissevain, J. (2008). Some notes on tourism and the revitalisation of calendrical festivals in Europe. *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, 18(1), 17–41.
17. Boo, S., & Busser, J. A. (2008). The Hierarchical Influence of Visitor Characteristics on Tourism Destination Images. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 19(4), 55–67.
18. Breakwell, G. M. (1983). *Threatened identities*. Wiley.
19. BRENNAN-HORLEY, C. H. R. I. S., Connell, J., & Gibson, C. (2007). The Parkes Elvis Revival Festival: Economic development and contested place identities in rural Australia. *Geographical Research*, 45(1), 71–84.
20. Brewer, M. B., & Gardner, W. (1996). *Who is this "We"? Levels of collective identity and self representations*. *Journal of personality and social psychology*. 71(1), 83.
21. Burke, P. J., & Tully, J. C. (1977). The measurement of role identity. *Social Forces*, 55(4), 881–897.
22. Buttimer, A., & Seamon, D. (2014). *The Human experience of space and place*. Routledge.
23. Carmona, M., Heath, T., Oc, T., & Tiesdell, S. (2003). *Public Places-Urban Space: The Dimensions of Urban Design*. Routledge.
24. Casey, E. S. (2000). *Imagining: A phenomenological study*. . Indiana University Press.
25. Casey, E. S. (2004). Public memory in time and place. *Framing Public Memory*, 17–44.
26. Casey, E. S. (2009). *Remembering: A phenomenological study*. Indiana University Press.
27. Centre for Urban Equity. (2014). *City Profile: Guwahati*.
28. Certeau, M. de. (1998). *The Practice of Everyday Life: Living and cooking. Volume 2* (L. Giard, Ed.). U of Minnesota Press.
29. Chang, T. C., & Huang, S. (2005). *Recreating place, replacing memory: Creative destruction at the Singapore River*. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*. 46(3), 267–280.

30. Choudhury, D. P. (1978). *North-east Frontier of India 1865-1914*. Asiatic Society.
31. Coffin, T. P., & Cohen, H. (1966). *Folklore in America: Tales, Songs, Superstitions, Proverbs, Riddles, Games, Folk Drama and Folk Festivals*. Doubleday.
32. Connerton, P. (1989). *How societies remember*. Cambridge University Press.
33. Cross, J. E. (2015). Processes of place attachment: An interactional framework. *Symbolic Interaction*, 38(4), 493–520.
34. Cudny, W. (2014). The phenomenon of festivals - their origins, evolution and classifications. *Anthropos*, 109(2).
35. Cudny, W. (2016). *Festivalisation of urban spaces: Factors, processes and effects*. Springer.
36. D'Andrade, R. G. (1992). Cognitive anthropology. *New Directions in Psychological Anthropology*, 47–58.
37. Das, A., & Das, A. K. (2021). Spectacles of the Temporal City: An Analysis of the Effects of Festivals on Identity in an Urban Context . In *Design for Tomorrow—Volume 1: Proceedings of ICoRD 2021*, 739–751.
38. Das, A., Hani, U., & Das, A. K. (2017). Spectacles of the City: An analysis of the effects of Festivals in the formation of New Urban Identities. In J. K B, N. M A, A. P. P. Kumar, C. K, N. Radhakrishnan, L. Manohar, & D. P (Eds.), *2nd International Conference on Design Pedagogy and Contextual Aesthetics* (pp. 491–500). NIT Calicut.
39. De Bres, K., & Davis, J. (2010). Celebrating group and place identity: A case study of a new regional festival. *Tourism Geographies*, 3(3), 326–337.
40. Deery, M., & Jago, L. (2010). Social impacts of events and the role of anti-social behaviour. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, 1(1), 8–28.
41. Derrett, R. (2003). Making sense of how festivals demonstrate a community's sense of place. *Event Management*, 8(1), 49–58.
42. Desai, J. (2017). Another way of making public places in old cities. In J. Desai, G. Rai, & R. Joshi (Eds.), *HRIDAY reflections: A Monograph on the Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana* (pp. 61–65). ICOMOS India and CEPT University.

43. Dessein, J., Soini, K., Fairclough, G., Horlings, L., Battaglini, E., Birkeland, I., Duxbury, N., de Beukelaer, C., Matejić, J., Stylianou-Lambert, T., Mihailova, M., Spinozzi, P., Cicerchia, A., Johannisson, J., Kangas, A., Lapka, M., Sesic-Dragicevic, M., Siivonen, K., Skjerven, A., ... Reimer, M. (2015). *Culture in, for and as sustainable development : conclusions from the COST Action IS1007 investigating cultural sustainability*.
44. DeWalt, M. K., & DeWalt, B. R. (2010). *Participant observation: A guide for fieldworkers*. Rowman Altamira.
45. Dixon, J., & Durrheim, K. (2000). Displacing place-identity: A discursive approach to locating self and other. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 39(1), 27–44.
46. Droseltis, O., & Vignoles, V. L. (2010). Towards an integrative model of place identification: Dimensionality and predictors of intrapersonal-level place preferences. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 30(1), 23–34.
47. Durkheim, E. (2016). The elementary forms of religious life. In *In Social Theory Re-Wired* (pp. 52–67). Routledge.
48. Eck, D. L. (1999). *Banaras, City of light*. Columbia University Press.
49. Eck, D. L. (2012). *India: A sacred geography*. . Harmony.
50. Edensor, T. (2001). Performing tourism, staging tourism: (Re)producing tourist space and practice. *Tourist Studies*, 1(1), 59–81.
51. Falassi, A. (1987). *Time out of Time: Essays on the Festival*. University of New Mexico Press.
52. Formica, S., & Uysal, M. (1996). The revitalization of Italy as a tourist destination. *Tourism Management*, 17(5), 323–331.
53. Fredline, E., & Faulkner, B. (2014). Residents' Reactions to the Staging of Major Motorsport Events Within Their Communities: A Cluster Analysis. *Event Management*, 7(2), 103–114.
54. Frenchman, D. (2004). Event-places in North America: City Meaning and Making [Research and Debate]. *Places*, 16(3).
55. Gait, E. A. (1963). *A history of Assam* (B. K. Barua & H. V. S. Murthy, Eds.). Thacker, Spink & Co.
56. Gehl, J. (2007). Public spaces for a changing public life. In *In Open space: People space* (pp. 23–30). Taylor & Francis.

57. George, H. (1962). *Mind, self, and society: from the standpoint of a social behaviorist*. . University of Chicago Press.
58. Getz, D. (1991). *Festivals, special events, and tourism*. . Van Nostrand Reinhold.
59. Gifford, R. (2014). Environmental psychology matters. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65(1), 541–579.
60. Given, L. M. (2008). *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. Sage publications.
61. GMDA. (2009). *Master Plan Guwahati 2025*.
62. Goodfriend, D. E. (1979). Nagar Yoga: The Culturally Informed Town Planning of Patrick Geddes in India 1914-1924. *Human Organization*, 38(4), 343–355.
63. Gotham, K. F. (2002). Marketing Mardi Gras: Commodification, spectacle and the political economy of tourism in New Orleans. *Urban Studies*, 39(10), 1735–1756.
64. Gotham, K. F. (2005). Theorizing urban spectacles. *City*, 9(2), 225–246.
65. Gottdiener, M. (2010). *The social production of urban space*. . University of Texas Press.
66. Grant Thornton India. (2011). *Appraisal of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM)*.
67. Gursoy, D., Kim, K., & Uysal, M. (2004). Perceived impacts of festivals and special events by organizers: an extension and validation. *Tourism Management*, 25(2), 171–181.
68. Hague, C., & Jenkins, P. (2004). *Place identity, participation and planning*. Routledge.
69. Halbwachs, M. (1992). On Collective Memory. In A. C. Lewis (Ed.), *Chicago and London. The University of Chicago Press*. University of Chicago Press.
70. Hall, C. M. (1992). *Hallmark tourist events: impacts, management and planning*. Belhaven Press.
71. Hammack, P. L. (2008). Narrative and the cultural psychology of identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 12(3), 222–247.

72. Hammitt, W. E., Backlund, E., & Bixler, R. (2006). Place Bonding for Recreation Places: Conceptual and Empirical Development. *Leisure Studies*, 25(1), 17–41.
73. Harcup, T. (2000). Re-imaging a post-industrial city: The Leeds St Valentine's Fair as a civic spectacle. *City*, 4(2), 215–231.
74. Hashemnezhad, H., Heidari, A. A., & Mohammad Hoseini, P. (2013). "Sense of place" and "place attachment". *International Journal of Architecture and Urban Development*, 3(1), 5–12.
75. Hay, R. (1998). Sense of place in developmental context. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 18(1), 5–29.
76. Hayden, D. (1995). *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*. MIT Press.
77. Hemani, S., & Das, A. K. (2016). City profile: Guwahati. *Cities*, 50, 137–157.
78. Hoelscher, S., & Alderman, D. H. (2004). Memory and place: geographies of a critical relationship. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 5(3), 347–355.
79. Howell, K. E. (2013). *Aspects of phenomenology. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Methodology*. SAGE.
80. Hughes, G. (1999). Urban revitalization: The use of festive time strategies. *Leisure Studies*, 18(2), 119–135.
81. ICOMOS India, & CEPT University. (2017). *A Monograph on the Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India*.
82. Ittelson, W. H. (1978). Environmental perception and urban experience. *Environment and Behavior*, 10(2), 193–213.
83. Iyengar, S. (2017). "HRIDAY" for those within - Need for recognition and integration. In J. Desai, G. Rai, & R. Joshi (Eds.), *HRIDAY reflections: A Monograph on the Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana* (pp. 37–39). ICOMOS India & CEPT University.
84. Josselson, R. (1994). Identity and relatedness in the life cycle in , (pp. 81–102). In H.A. Bosma, D.J. DeLevita, T.L.G. Graafsma, & H.D. Grotevant (Eds.), *Identity and Development: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, 81–102.
85. Kakoti, B. K. (1949). Assam through the Ages. In *Banikanta Kakati: The Man and His Works* (pp. 219–224).

86. Karlsen, S. (2007). *The music festival as an arena for learning: Festspel i Pite Älvdal and matters of identity* (Doctoral dissertation, Luleå tekniska universitet). Luleå University of Technology.
87. Kerstetier, D. L., & Mowrer, P. H. (1998). Individuals' Reasons for Attending First Night®, a Unique Cultural Event. *Festival Management and Event Tourism*.
88. Korpela, K. M. (1989). Place-identity as a product of environmental self-regulation. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 9(3), 241–256.
89. Kundu, D. (2014). Urban Development Programmes in India: A Critique of JnNURM. *Social Change*, 44(4), 615–632.
90. Kurin, R. (1985). Mela! An Indian Fair. *Festival of American Folklife*, 66.
91. Kyle, G. , Graefe, A., & Manning, R. (2005). Testing the dimensionality of place attachment in recreational settings. *Environment and Behavior*, 37(2), 153–177.
92. Ladd, B. (1997). *The ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German history in the urban landscape*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
93. Lalli, M. (1992). Urban-related identity: Theory, measurement, and empirical findings. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 12(4), 285–303.
94. Landry, C. (2012). *The creative city: A toolkit for urban innovators*. Earthscan.
95. Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The Production of Space*. Blackwell Ltd., Oxford UK & Cambridge USA.
96. Lewicka, M. (2005). Ways to make people active: The role of place attachment, cultural capital, and neighborhood ties. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 25(4), 381–395.
97. Lewicka, M. (2008). Place attachment, place identity, and place memory: Restoring the forgotten city past. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 28(3), 209–231.
98. Lewis-Beck, M., Bryman, A. E., & Liao, T. F. (2003). *The Sage encyclopedia of social science research methods*. Sage Publications.
99. Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. SAGE.
100. Liu, J. H., & Hilton, D. J. (2005). How the past weighs on the present: Social representations of history and their role in identity politics. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 44(4), 537–556.

101. Low, S. M. (1992). Symbolic ties that bind. In *In Place attachment* (pp. 165–185). Springer, Boston, MA.
102. Lynch, K. (1960). *Image of the City*. MIT Press.
103. Mahadevia, D., Desai, R., & Mishra, A. (2014). *City Profile: Guwahati* (No. 24).
104. Malpas, J. (2012). Putting space in place: Philosophical topography and relational geography. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 30(2), 226–242.
105. Manning, F. (1983). *The Celebration of Society: Perspectives on Contemporary Cultural Performance*. Bowling Green University Popular Press.
106. Manzo, L. C. (2005). For better or worse: Exploring multiple dimensions of place meaning. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 25(1), 67–86.
107. Mazumdar, S., & Mazumdar, S. (2004). Religion and place attachment: A study of sacred places. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 24(3), 385–397.
108. McKercher, B., Mei, W. S., & Tse, T. S. M. (2008). Are Short Duration Cultural Festivals Tourist Attractions? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 14(1), 55–66.
109. Mehrotra, R. (2004). Everyday Urbanism, Michigan Debates on Urbanism. In *ed. Everyday Urbanism, Margaret Crawford vs Michael Speaks*. The University of Michigan: Ann Arbor.
110. Merleau-Ponty, M. (2013). Phenomenology of perception. *Phenomenology of Perception*, 1–696.
111. Michaels, A. (2010). *The grammar of rituals*. Harrassowitz.
112. Mihalik, B. J. (2000). Host population perceptions of the 1996 Atlanta Olympics: Support, benefits, and liabilities. *Tourism Analysis*, 5(1), 49–53.
113. Miles, S., & Paddison, R. (2005). Introduction: The rise and rise of culture-led urban regeneration. *Urban Studies*, 42(5–6), 833–839.
114. Miller, R. L., Brewer, J. D., & Eds. (2003). *The AZ of social research: A dictionary of key social science research concepts*. SAGE.
115. Mills, A. J., Durepos, G., Wiebe, E., & eds. (2009). *Encyclopedia of case study research*. Sage Publications.

116. Ministry of Tourism. (2014). *PRASAD-National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive*.
117. Ministry of Tourism, & GOI. (2015). *Scheme Guidelines for National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive*.
118. Mitzman, A. B. (1994). *Historical Identity and Identity of the Historian*.
119. Mohr K, Backman K.F., Gahan L.W., & Backman S.J. (1993). An investigation of festival motivations and events satisfaction by visitor type. *Festival Management & Event Tourism*, 1(3), 89–97.
120. MoUD, & GOI. (2014). *Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana*.
121. Narayanan, Y. (2014). *Religion, heritage and the sustainable city: Hinduism and urbanisation in Jaipur*. . Routledge.
122. Neisser, U. (1967). *Cognitive psychology*. Appleton-Century-Crofts.
123. Neuenfeldt, K. W. (1995). The Kyana Corroboree: Cultural production of Indigenous Ethnogenesis. *Sociological Inquiry*, 65(1), 21–46.
124. Olick, J. K., & Robbins, J. (1998). Social memory studies: From "collective memory" to the historical sociology of mnemonic practices. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 105–140.
125. O'sullivan, D., & Jackson, M. J. (2010). Festival Tourism: A Contributor to Sustainable Local Economic Development? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 10(4), 325–342.
126. Patton, M. Q. (2002). Two decades of developments in qualitative inquiry: A personal, experiential perspective. *Qualitative Social Work*, 1(3), 261–283.
127. Pine, J., & Gilmore, J. H. (1999). *The experience economy: Work is theatre & every business a stage*. . Harvard Business Press.
128. Proshansky, H. M. (1978). The city and self-identity. *Environment and Behavior*, 10(2), 147–169.
129. Proshansky, H. M., Ittelson, W. H., & Rivlin, L. G. (1970). The Influence of the Physical Setting on Behaviour: Some Basic Assumptions. *Environmental Psychology: Man and His Physical Setting*.
130. Pullan, W., Baillie, B., & Kyriacou, L. (2013). *Locating urban conflicts : ethnicity, nationalism and the everyday*. 255.

131. Qazimi, S. (2014). Sense of place and place identity. *European Journal of Social Science Education and Research*, 1(1), 306–310.
132. Quinn, B. (2005). Arts festivals and the city. *Urban Studies*, 42(5–6), 927–943.
133. Quinn, B. (2019). Festivals and social sustainability. In J. Mair (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Festivals* (Vol. 1st, pp. 53–62). Routledge.
134. Quinn, B., & Wilks, L. (2013). Festival connections: people, place and social capital.. In *Exploring the social impacts of events* (pp. 15–30). Routledge.
135. Ralston, L., & Crompton, J. (1988). *Motivations, service quality and economic impact of visitors to the 1987 Dickens on the Strand emerging from a mail-back survey*.
136. Ramos, I. (2017). *Pilgrimage and Politics in Colonial Bengal: The Myth of the Goddess Sati*. Taylor & Francis.
137. Rapaport, A. (1977). *Human aspects of urban form*.
138. Ravindran, K. T. (2017). Foreword. In J. Desai, G. Rai, & R. Joshi (Eds.), *HRIDAY reflections: A Monograph on the Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana* (p. 15). ICOMOS India and CEPT University.
139. Relph, E. (1976). *Place and placelessness* (Vol. 67). London: Pion.
140. Relph, E. (2008). *Place and Placelessness* (A. J. Scott, Ed.; 2nd ed.). Pion Ltd.
141. Richards, G., & Palmer, R. (2010a). *Eventful Cities: Cultural Management and Urban Revitalisation*. Routledge.
142. Richards, G., & Palmer, R. (2010b). Why cities need to be eventful. *Eventful Cities*, 1–37.
143. Richeimer, J. (2006). Familiarity and the inferential theory of perception. *Theory & Psychology*, 16(4), 505–525.
144. Ritchie, J. R. B., & Beliveau, D. (2016). Hallmark Events: An Evaluation of a Strategic Response to Seasonality in the Travel Market. *Journal of Travel Research*, 13(2), 14–20.
145. Robinson, M., Picard, D., & Long, P. (2008). INTRODUCTION
FESTIVAL TOURISM: PRODUCING, TRANSLATING, AND
CONSUMING EXPRESSIONS OF CULTURE(S). *Event Management*, 8(4), 187–189.

146. Rosenberg, M. (1979). *Conceiving the self*. New York: Basic Books.
147. Rose-Redwood, R., Alderman, D., & Azaryahu, M. (2008). Collective memory and the politics of urban space: An Introduction. *GeoJournal*, 73(3), 161–164.
148. Rossi, A. (1982). *The Architecture of the City*. Cambridge and London: The MIT Press.
149. Saikia, M. (1996). *Physical Development of Guwahati City*.
150. Salamone, F. A. (2004). *Encyclopedia of religious rites, rituals, and festivals*. . Routledge.
151. Saran, A. B., & Pandey, G. (1992). *Sun Worship in India: A Study of Deo Sun-Shrine*. Northern Book Centre.
152. Scannell, L., & Gifford, R. (2010). Defining place attachment: A tripartite organizing framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 30(1), 1–10.
153. Schecher, R. (2003). *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. Routledge.
154. Schneider, I. E., & Backman, S. J. (1996). Cross-cultural equivalence of festival motivations: A study in Jordan. *Festival Management and Event Tourism*, 4(3-4), 139-144., 4(3-4), 139–144.
155. Schulz, N. C. (1979). *Genius Loci- Towards a phenomenology of Architecture*. Rizolli.
156. Schulz, N. C. (1988). *Architecture, meaning and place selected essays*.
157. Schulz, N. C. (2019). Genius loci: towards a phenomenology of architecture (1979). *Historic Cities: Issues in Urban Conservation*, 8(31).
158. Scott, D. (1995). A comparison of visitors' motivations to attend three urban festivals. *Festival Management and Event Tourism*, 3(3), 121–128.
159. Seamon, D. (2014). Place Attachment and Phenomenology: The Synergistic Dynamism of Place. In L. C. Manzo & P. D. Wright (Eds.), *Place Attachment: Advances in Theory, Methods, and Applications* (pp. 11–22). Routledge.
160. Sepe, M. (2013). Planning and place in the city: Mapping place identity. *Routledge*.
161. Shepherd, R. (2002). Commodification, culture and tourism. *Tourist Studies*, 2(2), 183–201.

162. Sherry, J. J. F. (1983). *Gift giving in anthropological perspective. Journal of consumer research*. 10(2), 157–168.
163. Singh, B. (2018). Cultural Resurgence, Place Making and Urbanism. *Indian Anthropologist*, Vol. 48, No. 2(Culture, Place and Ecology), 7–20.
164. Singh, R. P. B., & Kinsley, D. R. (2010). *Sacred geography of goddesses in South Asia : essays in memory of David Kinsley*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
165. Singh, R. S. (2011). The Kamakhya Devi Temple: Symbolism, Sacredscapes and Festivities. In *Holy Places and Pilgrimages: Essays on India* (pp. 81–104). Shubhi Publications, New Delhi.
166. Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. SAGE.
167. Snow, D. (2001). *Collective identity and expressive forms*.
168. Soja, E. (2003). Writing the city spatially. *City*, 7(3), 269–280.
169. Spiro, M. E. (1971). *Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and Its Burmese Vicissitudes*. Harper & Row.
170. Stedman, R. C. (2011). Is It Really Just a Social Construction?: The Contribution of the Physical Environment to Sense of Place. *Society & Natural Resources*, 16(8), 671–685.
171. Stevens, Q., & Shin, H. (2014). Urban festivals and local social space. *Planning Practice and Research*, 29(1), 1–20.
172. Stokols, D., & Shumaker, S. A. (1987). People in Places: A Transactional view of settings. In C. S. Yadav (Ed.), *Perceptual and Cognitive Image of the City*. Concept Publishing Company.
173. Strauss, C. (1992). *Models and motives*. Cambridge University Press.
174. Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2021). *Sage handbook of Mixed methods in Social & Behavioral Research*. SAGE publications.
175. Thakurta, T. G. (2004). From Spectacle to “Art.” *The Art News Magazine of India*, ix(iii), 34–56.
176. Thapar, R. (2005). Cyclic and linear time in early India . *Museum International*, 57(3), 19–31.

177. The Assam Gazette-Government of Assam. (2020). *The Assam Heritage (Tangible) Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Maintenance Act, 2020 T.*
178. Thrane, C. (2016). Jazz Festival Visitors and Their Expenditures: Linking Spending Patterns to Musical Interest. *Journal of Travel Research*, 40(3), 281–286.
179. Tiwari, R. (2010). *Space-Body-Ritual: Performativity in the City*. . Lexington Books.
180. Tuan, Y. F. (1975). Place: an experiential perspective. *Geographical Review*, 151–165.
181. Tuan, Y. F. (1979). Space and place: humanistic perspective. *Philosophy in Geography*, 387–428.
182. Tuan, Y. F. (1997). *Space and Place*. University of Minnesota Press.
183. Tuan, Y.-F. (1974). Topophilia. “A Study of Environmental Perception.” . *Attitudes, and Values*.
184. Turner, E. (2012). *Communitas: The anthropology of collective joy*. . Springer.
185. Turner, J. C., Hogg, M. A., Oakes, P. J., Reicher, S. D., & Wetherell, M. S. (1987). *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory*. . basil Blackwell.
186. Turner, J. C., Oakes, P. J., Haslam, S. A., & McGarty, C. (1994). Self and collective: Cognition and social context. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20(5), 454–463.
187. Turner, V. (1969). Liminality and Communitas. In *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (pp. 94–113). Aldine Publishing.
188. Turner, V. (1982). *Celebration: Studies in Festivity and Ritual*. Smithsonian Institution.
189. Turner, V. (1987). *The anthropology of performance*. PAJ Publications.
190. Twigger-Ross, C. L., & Uzzell, D. L. (1996). Place and identity processes. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 16(3), 205–220.
191. UN. (2016). Socio-cultural urban frameworks. *Habitat III, Policy Paper*.
192. UNESCO. (2009). *Investing in cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue*.

193. UNESCO. (2011). *Intangible Cultural Heritage Domains*.
194. UN-Habitat. (2004). The State of the World's Cities. *Globalization and Urban Culture*.
195. United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). (2010). *Culture: Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development*.
196. Urban, H. B. (2019). 'The Cradle of Tantra': Modern Transformations of a Tantric Centre in Northeast India from Nationalist Symbol to Tourist Destination. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 42(2), 256–277.
197. Uysal, M., Gahan, L., & Martin, B. (1993). An examination of event motivations: A case study. *Festival Management and Event Tourism*, 1(1), 5–10.
198. Uzzell, D. L. (1995). The myth of the indoor city. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 15(4), 299–310.
199. van der Werff, J. J. (1985). Individual problems of self-definition an overview, and a view. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 8(4), 445–471.
200. Van Gennep, A. (1960). *The Rites of Passage*. Chicago University Press.
201. Veblen, T. B. (1899). *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. Houghton Mifflin.
202. Vignoles, V. L., Regalia, C., Manzi, C., Golledge, J., & Scabini, E. (2006). Beyond self-esteem: Influence of multiple motives on identity construction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90(2).
203. Waterman, S. (1998). Carnivals for elites? The cultural politics of arts festivals. *Progress in Human Geography*, 22(1), 54–74.
204. Wellington, J., & Hammond, M. (2012). *Research methods: The key concepts*. Routledge.
205. Welter, V. M. (2003). *Biopolis: Patrick Geddes and the city of life*. MIT Press.
206. Westman, J. C., & Walters, J. R. (1981). Noise and stress: a comprehensive approach. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 41, 291–309.
207. Whyte, W. H. (1980). The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces. *The Conservation Foundation: Washington DC*.

208. Williams, D. R., Patterson, M. E., Roggenbuck, J. W., & Watson, A. E. (1992). Beyond the commodity metaphor: Examining emotional and symbolic attachment to place. *Leisure Sciences*, 14(1), 29–46.
209. Wilmersdörffer, R., & Schlicher, D. (2019). Evaluating the sociocultural effects of festivals: developing a comprehensive impact correlation model and its application. In J. Mair (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Festivals* (1st ed., pp. 62–71). Routledge.
210. Woodward, K. (2002). *Understanding identity*. Oxford University Press.
211. Yin, R. K. (2003). *Designing case studies. Qualitative research methods* (L. Maruster, Ed.; 14th ed., Vol. 5). SAGE.
212. Yu, Y., & Turco, D. M. (2010). Issues in Tourism Event Economic Impact Studies: The Case of the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 3(2), 138–149.
213. Zhang, Y., & Huxham, C. (2009). Identity construction and trust building in developing international collaborations. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 45(2), 186–211.
214. Zukin, S. (1995). *The Culture of Cities*. Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
215. Zukin, S. (2012). Whose culture? Whose city? In J. Lin & C. Mele (Eds.), *The urban sociology reader* (2nd ed., pp. 363–371). Routledge.



ANNEXURE 1: Semi-structured questionnaire survey during festive events

During the festive events of Ambubachi Mela and Chhath Puja, with the intent to interpret the role of the spatial setting in enhancing the festive experience, four guiding questions were used during conversations with the participants. The following is a transcript during the festive event of Chhath Puja along with the analysis of the spatial aspects which enhance the festive experience. The conversations were carried out in various locations of the festival.

Can you briefly describe your experience of the Chhath Puja? The sequence of events and your feelings during the experience?

Transcribed Interview Questions and Answers	Event-space relationship	Spatial Aspects
P1 My parents are native of Bihar, but I was born here in Guwahati. We think of this festival to be a celebration of the entire family. My parents are just over here today, distributing prasad to the devotees. Every year around this time all our relatives come to Guwahati. We all help our parents to prepare the prasada. We take responsibility to procure the ingredients, to arrange for the vessels, prepare the chulhas and the bamboo winnows where the prasada is offered.	Granularity Intimacy	- Point of pause - Interactive Edge
P4 The addition of more number of ghats and rerouting of traffic to make the roads free for pedestrian movement has allowed us to enjoy the festival freely. Earlier, it was difficult to navigate to the ghats while carrying the huge prasada basket on our heads. The M.G. Road is a completely commercial area but during the festival, the shops leave out space for the festival to take place. Everyone in their own way sort of contribute towards the festival	Territory Scale Movement	- Distinct morphology of edges - Flexible built typology - Sameness of edges - Expandable spaces to accommodate the scale of the event - Networked event spaces - Focal points - Permeable event spaces - Distinct points of pauses

How did you interact with your fellow participants of the festival?

Transcribed Interview Questions and Answers	Event-space relationship	Spatial Aspects
P5 The entire festival of Chhath is about building the sense of community as we do everything together. We offer our arghya together, distribute prasada and sweets together as well as sing folk songs together. Our entire family, our relatives, neighbours, all are part of this festival. There are hundreds of devotees who perform all these rituals together and it makes us all feel like being part of one large family.	Scale Triangulation	- Expandable spaces to accommodate the scale of the event - The length and width of the ghats - Sameness of edges - Spaces for informal and formal performances - Multiple points of pauses with gathering spaces

What is the significance of Chhath Puja for you? Have you observed any changes over time?

Transcribed Interview Questions and Answers	Event-space relationship	Spatial Aspects
P3 For us celebrating this festival is all about connecting to our roots . Even though we have settled here in Guwahati since many years, this festival helps us in retaining our connect to our native place . We have tried to maintain the rituals followed since generations. Though now, people are also adopting new ways like decorating their space in the ghat. There is proper planning nowadays, so the ghats are allocated accordingly, safety measures are followed everywhere, volunteers are there to help devotees when required.	Embeddedness Sensuality	- Spatial embeddedness of rituals and activities to the event spaces - Symbolic rooting of the festival - Presence of symbolic spatial elements which enhance the reconnect with the festival - Historical/mythical base of the festival - Visual setting of the festival - Symbolic colours and visual motifs - Temporary structures as focal points

What is the significance of the location for the celebration of the festival?

Transcribed Interview Questions and Answers	Event-space relationship	Spatial Aspects
P2 The river is the most integral aspect of the festival of Chhath Puja. Without the river, or any water body source, we cannot perform our rituals. We have been visiting this ghat each year to perform the rituals. But a lot depends on the river, as every year the ghats get transformed and some get added while some are no longer accessible.	Embeddedness Narratives	- Spatial embeddedness of rituals and activities to the event spaces - Symbolic spaces - Focal points

ANNEXURE 2: Process of decoding factors forming Place Identity from analysis of semi-structured questionnaire

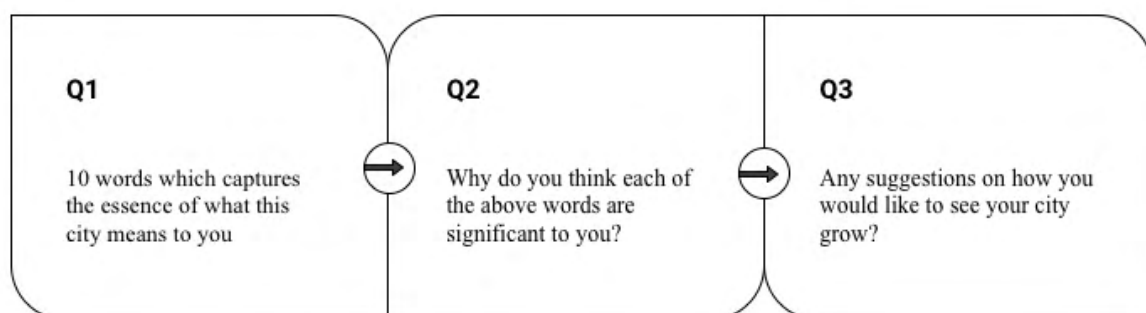
This questionnaire is solely for the purpose of analysing the manner in which people's perception of their city of residence forms.

This is purely for academic purpose and is part of the doctoral research work of Anusmita Das.

It is hereby assured that the anonymity of the participants would be respected and their personal details will not be any part of this thesis report or other publications without prior permission.

People place associations are formed when one stays at a place over a long duration of time. As such, they form a certain perception around that particular place/city which is influenced by a variety of factors. These meanings that one attaches to their city are very specific to that particular person and based on their experiences of the city. Each question in the questionnaire consisting of thirteen questions probed a specific aspect of people-place association as derived from the literature review

STEP I: Preliminary semi-structured interview



10 words which captures the essence of what Guwahati city means to you.

Festivals and Occasions, The river Brahmaputra, Natural Beauty, Ancient city, Heritage buildings from colonial era, Food, Kamakhya Temple, Gateway, Diversity, Roots

Why do you think each of the above words are significant to you?

Festivals and Occasions

It was always a time to greet and meet and eat a lot of food. It meant celebrating uruka and bihu with the entire family.

Sensory
engagement
with place
Place event
engagement

The River

I associate Guwahati with the calmness of the mighty river and its banks, the smell of flowers from the stalls in the ghat, the ferry rides across the river, reminding us of tales of heroes of the bygone years who died fighting for the city and its people.

Narratives
adding
symbolic
meaning to
place

Natural Beauty

With its unique landscape, surrounded by hills and the river Brahmaputra coursing through it, Guwahati mesmerises anyone who visits this city.

Distinctiveness

Kamakhya Temple

The Kamakhya Temple holds a special place in my life because my family has a custom of going there at the beginning of each new year.

Continuity
through place
invariants

Ancient city

It is an ancient city and finds mention in the ancient Puranas. There are many ancient temples such as Kamakhya Temple, Ugratara and many more.

Historical
knowledge of
the place

Food

Going down to Guwahati meant no studies, no homework, no getting up in the morning or going to school; it meant family time, playing with cousins, visiting relatives, lunch and dinner invites, or going to Nehru Park or the Zoo, or for ice cream to Gems, opposite to the stadium.

Emotional
attachment to
place

Place memory

Diversity

Place
dependence

My hometown is Guwahati, the gateway to Northeast India. I moved in with my family from upper Assam to this place in 2003, and have lived here ever since.

Roots

The city is a continual reminder of where my roots are planted and where generations of my family have been settled in. In a way it defines my origin. Sometimes it fascinates me how different generations of my family have been a witness to the drastically changing landscape of the city through these years.

I have roamed and resided in more than 20 states in India and no other state could give me this sense of fulfilment.

Belongingness

Spirit of place

Historical
attachment to
place

Gateway

Guwahati is connected with the rest of India through two bridges over the Brahmaputra river. Thus, these two bridges hold a lot of significance and an important role in the growth of the city. Guwahati is also the commercial hub in the Northeastern part of India and considered the gateway to this part of the country.

Self-esteem &
Self-efficacy

Heritage buildings from colonial era

Apart from the natural beauty, Guwahati also has many colonial era buildings which are known as Assam type houses and are very unique to the region.

Distinctiveness

Urban
reminders of
place

Any suggestions on how you would like to see Guwahati grow?

Guwahati, once a beautiful city, is not suitable for living. Answer lies in the above, how can we revive its glorious past again and make it a place worth living. So long its residents are not committed, it will never grow, rather it will continue to deteriorate further.

I want the people of the city to be mindful of their actions towards public

Feeling of loss
Self-esteem &
Self-efficacy

Place

property. There should be awareness programs for people on how to keep **involvement** their city clean. We need proper leaders who can guide the people. People should also be encouraged to maintain the environment and retain the natural beauty of this city.

 Sensory engagement with place	 Emotional attachment to place	 Historical attachment to place
 Place event engagement	 Place dependence	 Self-esteem & Self-efficacy
 Narratives	 Place memory	 Urban reminders of place
 Distinctiveness	 Belongingness	 Feeling of loss
 Continuity through place invariants	 Spirit of place	 Place involvement
 Historical knowledge of the place		



ANNEXURE 3: Construction of semi-structured questionnaire taking cues from the transcribed preliminary studies

The questionnaire is designed for the purpose of decoding participant's perception of the cultural event places selected under the case studies. This is purely for academic purpose and is part of the doctoral research work of Anusmita Das.

It is hereby assured that the anonymity of the participants would be respected and their personal details will not be any part of this thesis report or other publications without prior permission.

A sample of how the responses were collected is given below.

Name: Nabakumar Das **Gender:** Male **Age:** 55

Occupation: Small business owner (sells puja items)

Participation in Ambubachi Mela: 16 times

Place of residence: Bijni

QUESTIONNAIRE

Historical attachment to cultural events

1. As you have been a regular participant in this festival in Guwahati, there must be some aspects of the cultural event space that hold significance for you. Which are they?

Kamakhya Temple (The core)

Brahmaputra River

Tantric traditions manifested in the form of spatial practices of rituals of the festival

Narratives

2. Have you heard of/ know any stories/ myths related to this festival?

Legends around the origin of the Kamakhya temple

Various reminders of the myths, legends in and around the temple complex such as the

Nilachal hill, shrines nearby, etc.

Place event engagement

3. How was your experience of the festival?

The flexible characteristic of the event spaces encouraging many formal and informal activities

Interacting with fellow devotees, tantrics, baul singers

Place dependence

4. How do you feel your needs and desires are fulfilled by this event space?

Kamakhya Temple-Spiritual need

Auxilliary event spaces, accommodation camps

Accommodating variety of activities-informal vendors

Historical knowledge of the event

5. Are you aware of the history of the festival? What aspects do you feel are important as part of history?

Kamakhya Temple precinct

Surrounding shrines

Site of the event

Narratives, legends, myths

Urban Reminders

6. What aspects of the cultural event spaces invoke memories of experience/ narrative?

Site of the historic Kamakhya Temple

Narratives around the Nilachal hill

Place memory

7. What aspects of the cultural event spaces invoke individual/collective memories of experience?

Social interactions with fellow participants

Performance of cultural practices collectively

Shared connectedness akin to a family

Sensory engagement with place

8. How was your experience during the celebration of the event in the event spaces? Mention a few places of the cultural event spaces which have contributed to your experience.

The forests adorning the path to the temple, the view of the Brahmaputra river,
informal vendors displaying their wares alongside the huge fair

Continuity through invariants

9. What aspects of the cultural event spaces have retained their essence over time?

The spiritual significance of Maa Kamakhya as one of the most important of the Shakti peethas

Distinctiveness

10. What features/aspects of the cultural event spaces are distinct from other such event spaces?

The natural beauty of the hills surrounding the Kamakhya Temple, the flamboyant tantrics from all over the world, Sadhus, Sanyasis, the huge number of devotees, the festive fervour, all come together to create a visual spectacle

Spirit of the cultural event

11. Characteristic features/aspects which define the essence/values of the cultural event?

Reverence to Maa Kamakhya (the deity)

Connection with strangers/ collective attachment

Relative absence of material pleasures

Self-esteem & self-efficacy

12. Characteristic features/aspects of cultural event spaces which reinforce positive reinforcement of the self?

Myths, legends, around Kamakhya Temple

Presence of crowd

Social entity

Foregoing material pleasures

Emotional attachment

13. Characteristic features/aspects of cultural event spaces you have an emotional attachment to and do not want to change?

Spiritual essence of the festival

Place involvement

14. Any feature/aspect promoting or obstructing involvement?

Meeting fellow devotees, tantrics, etc.

Spiritual devotion

Familiarity

ANNEXURE 4: A study and exploration of the transmutative visual culture of 'Magh Bihu' in Assam

Bihu is a festival connected with the seasonal and agricultural cycle and is an integral part of Assamese culture. It is one of the most important cultural markers of the Assamese community. There are three kinds of Bihu celebrated at different times of the year- the Bohag or Rongali Bihu celebrated in spring, the Kati or Kongali Bihu celebrated in autumn, and the Magh or Bhogali Bihu celebrated after the harvesting season i.e. in winter. The Magh Bihu is akin to the Makar Sankranti festival observed by the people of other states of India. This harvest festival celebrated in Assam is also dedicated to the Hindu fire God, Lord Agni. On the eve of Magh Bihu, called Uruka, a special temporary temple-like structure called Meji is made out of bamboo, thatch and leaves. Makeshift huts called Bhelaghar made of bamboo and haystacks are built by the men folk near the Meji to spend the night. After preparing and enjoying a feast inside the Bhelaghar, men spend the night there and in the early hours of the next morning light the Bhelaghar down. Its ashes are then spread to the fields and the trees to bring luck for better harvest in the future. Magh Bihu indicates the gathering-in of the harvest. This festival fosters social interactions through community fishing, community hunting, and community feasts (or communal feasts). Apart from that, various games and recreations such as egg-fighting, buffalo fighting, bird-fighting and so forth are important aspects of Magh Bihu. Bihu is a synthesis of varied cultural elements. It is therefore evident that customs and traditions associated with the present day Bihu festival were not adopted by a single race of people; rather, these evolved on the cultural traits of diverse races who had migrated to this land. In the transition from agrarian to post-modern forms of economy, the folk festivals have lost their significance as symbolic enactments of agrarian rituals and feasts. Assam, situated on the North eastern part of India, is an amalgamation of diversified cultures and has been at the receiving end of both inter-cultural and intra-cultural influences. With the advent of globalisation, new cultural elements have emerged which shape the common way of life of communities. In the face of Multicultural dimensions and Globalisation, there is this growing desire for ethnic recognition in individuals and groups, a search for ethnic identity, and a conscious exhibition of distinctive ethnic traits. Communities seek to re-assert their identities in the face of a feeling of cultural dislocation brought about by rapid structural change, social mobility and globalisation processes. Identity is created through a process of socialisation. Our families teach us about our familial, gender,

racial, religious, ethnic and national identities and roles. Our peers reinforce group social norms. Our primary and secondary education reinforces the dominant social identity ideals and roles while our higher education teaches us our work and professional identities and roles. The media reinforces dominant social ideals and constructs new realities while at the same time it creates new social ideals such as consumerism. In the flurry of such influences on the identity of this festival of Bihu, certain cultural elements have transformed and emerged which provides a new area for identity construction.

Cultural Markers of Bihu

Symbolism is an important aspect of Visual culture. In Assam, Symbolism is an ancient cultural practice which is still very important for the people. Tamulpan, Xorai, Japi and Gamosa are four important symbolic elements in Assamese culture. Tamulpan (the areca nut and betel leaves) is considered as the offer of devotion, respect and friendship. It is an ancient tradition and has been followed since time-immemorial with roots in the aboriginal Austroasiatic culture.

	Artifact	Image	Traditional usage	Image	Contemporary usage
1.	Japi		Worn on the head as a protection against the elements (sun and rain). Offered as a sign of respect in felicitation ceremonies. Placed as decorative items in and around the house (especially near the front door as a welcome sign). There is a style of Bihu dance with Japi. A symbol representing Assam.		Although Japi is a traditional and historical craft of Assam, now days craft person, artisans, different artists across Assam have tried to imitate & explore the Japi for traditional Bamboo craft to other materials like Bel Metal, Brass metal, Assamese traditional Jewellery in Japi form, in Assamese Traditional Textiles like Hand woven traditional Jowel 'Gamosa' an also in various Mchala Chadias made in Japi.
2.	Gamosa		Used daily to wipe the body after a bath (an act of purification). It is used by the farmer as a waistcloth (tonagi) or a loin cloth (murya). Bihu dancer wraps it around the head with a fluffy knot. It is hung around the neck at the prayer hall and was thrown over the shoulder in the past to signify social status. Guests are welcomed with the offering of a gamosa and tamul (betel nut) and elders are offered gamosas (biluwaan) during Bihu. It is used to cover the altar at the prayer hall or cover the scriptures. An object of reverence is never placed on the bare ground, but always on a gamosa. One can therefore, very well say, that the gamosa symbolizes the life and culture of Assam.		Gamosa is now available in various motifs and are mostly machine made. They have found their usage in other forms such as scarves, tops, etc.
3.	Xorai		Xorai, a traditional symbol of Assam, is a manufactured bell-metal object and an article of great respect. It is used as a container-medium while performing respectful offerings. As an offering tray for tamul-pan (betel nuts and betel leaves) to guests as a sign of welcome and thanks. As an offering tray for food and other items placed in front of the altar (moungdur) for blessing by the Lord. As a decorative symbol in traditional functions such as during Bihu dances. As a gift to a person of honour during felicitations.		With the advent of the global market new usage of the traditional Xorai has emerged. Some of them include Fridge magnets, Bamboo Xorai, Gateway design, etc.

Figure A1: Comparative study of symbolic artifacts used in Bihu in traditional and contemporary context.

Transmutative visual culture of Bihu

Bihu, following in the footsteps of Durga Puja has much to collaborate with the contemporary Visual culture of modern India. Its visual culture employs fragmented, hybrid cross cultural signs to override notions of cultural authenticity; yet paradoxically, it also celebrates indigenous traditions and sentiments. At this vibrant moment, it is only logical that the local contemporary art would also want to negotiate its position in a global arena, which is precisely why the production of theme festivals, along with other aspects of the spectacle, requires serious scrutiny.



Figure A2: Symbolic representations of cultural element Japi from Assamese culture depicted in the traditional Bhelaghar of Magh Bihu.



Figures A3, A4: Symbolic representations of cultural element from media inspired culture depicted in the traditional Bhelaghar of Magh Bihu.

ANNEXURE 5: Morphology of festival: Temporal marker, Spatial marker, Narrative fortifier and Visual Identifier

Semiotics as a discourse analyzes the processes of constructing and understanding meanings through the study of signs based on the denotative correlation with the cultural values of a given society. Urban Semiotics, with its roots in social semiotics, is the semiotic approach to urban studies which considers social connotations in addition to the phenomenological analysis and denotative meanings of signs. As such, urban semiotics focuses on the tangible and intangible cultural products in urban form. Many scholars such as Barthes, Greimas, Jachna, Rose-Redwood et al. have produced seminal work through semiotic models in empirical studies of the urban landscape to highlight the construction of meaning in urban environments. In the case of the Ambubachi Mela in the historic core of Kamakhya, a multitude of inter-relations between people, rituals, myths, stories conjoin to create the urban imagery of the urban form and the ritual. Van Gennep (1982: 202) addresses the dimension of time through the division of rituals into three stages- the 'preliminal', 'liminal' and 'post liminal' where the ritual time occurs during the 'liminal' stage. The 'preliminal' stage demarcates the spiritual time in space from the everyday mundane space-time and commences before the start of the festival of Ambubachi. This period can extend to a year as well, with the arrival of the devotees from various parts of the globe and the celebratory measures undertaken by the temple authorities apart from the organisational measures. The 'liminal' period commences with the closing of the door of the temple for three days to all devotees to preserve the sanctity of the ritual of menstruation of the Goddess. On the fourth day, the idol of the Goddess is bathed and is taken out in a circumbulatory procession around the temple. The doors of the temple are opened after this ritual. The 'post liminal' period can be identified by the desanctify of the religious urban spaces, the removal of the decorative elements from the celebration spaces and the return of the devotees. This can be denoted as a temporal marker of the urban spectacle as it culminates in the temporal erasure of memory from the urban fabric and the narratives associated with this festival. Festivals are inseparable from their spatial settings. Neither can they be separated from the participants that occupy those spaces. There is an intuitive relationship between festivals, their spatial settings and the participants. The site of the Ambubachi Mela festival is the Kamakhya temple. During the festival, the site of the festival transforms into a space for celebration. This space inscribed in myths, stories, rituals and collective memory is easily

demarcated from the everyday spaces surrounding it. Having defined edges, Ambubachi can be separated in space or time from the common terrain. The road leading up to the Kamakhya Temple has an entrance gate which clearly demarcates and designates it from the urban fabric of the city. It creates a territory which allows people to separate themselves emotionally from everyday life and give themselves over to the festival. Thus, the urban space of the Ambubachi festival is a spatial marker with a clear boundary during the days of the festival. The festival of Ambubachi is rich in its narrative of various myths, stories about the Goddess Kamakhya, the origin of Kamakhya which finds mention in various mythological texts. As these stories are repeated cyclically over the years, they are passed down into generations since the time of its origin and have thus merged with the collective memory of the people and the space. Festivals thus act as narrative fortifier with a strong foothold in the past, present and the future. As Kamakhya Temple prepares for the Ambubachi festival, the visual imagery of the temple as the site of pilgrimage ground is experienced through the throngs of ascetics, trantiks and devotees, decorations, and the general air of festivity surrounding it. The senses of the visual are stimulated through the feel of movement through space, the sight of costumes and colour, decorations of the temple, accompanied by various smells blended by the imagination into an unusual experience. During Ambubachi Mela, the visual setting of the festivals transports one to a surreal experience. As emotions are heightened, these urban spaces gain special importance as sites for collective memory and attachment.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

1. Das, A., Hani, U., & Andukuri, S. H. (2017). Transmutative Visual Culture of Folk Festivals in a Semi-urban Scenario: A Study and Exploration of 'Magh Bihu' in Assam. In *Research into Design for Communities, Volume 2: Proceedings of ICoRD 2017* (pp. 811-820). Springer Singapore.
2. Das, A., Das, A., & Andukuri, S. H. (2017). Transmutative Visual Culture of a non-native festival: A study and exploration of Chhath Puja' in Assam. Paper presented in *National Conference on 'Culture-Design-Cognition'*. Bengaluru.
3. Das, A., & Das, A. K. (2018). Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Urban Fabric: Reflections on Urban Festivals. In *Conference Internationale Sur La Conservation Urbaine*. Kolkata.
4. Das, A., & Das, A. K. (2018). The Temporal City: Urban Festivals, Urban Identity and the Urban Social Space. Paper presented in *Twelfth International Conference on Design Principles and Practices*. ELISAVA Barcelona School of Design, Barcelona.
5. Das, A., Hani, U., & Das, A. K. (2019). Spectacles of the City: An analysis of the effects of Festivals in the formation of New Urban Identities. In *2nd International Conference on Design Pedagogy and Contextual Aesthetics2* (pp. 491-500). NIT Calicut.
6. Das, A., & Das, A. K. (2019). Visual Culture of Urban Spectacles: A Discourse on Festivals in the Light of Urban Semantics. In *Research into Design for a Connected World: Proceedings of ICoRD 2019 Volume 2* (pp. 315-326). Springer Singapore.
7. Das, A., & Das, A. K. (2021). Spectacles of the Temporal City: An Analysis of the Effects of Festivals on Identity in an Urban Context. In *Design for Tomorrow—Volume 1: Proceedings of ICoRD 2021* (pp. 739-751). Springer Singapore.